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The genius of Henry
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THE GENIUS OF HENRY FIELDING



HENRY FIELDING,ÆTATIS XLVIII.

DRAWING BY HOGARTH FROM MEMORY
NO AUTHENTIC PORTRAIT EXISTS

THE
GENIUS OF HENRY FIELDING
(WITH SELECTIONS FROM HIS WORKS)

INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY
HENRY H. HARPER



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THE GENIUS OF HENRY FIELDING

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What is the poor pride arising from a magnificent house, a numerous equipage, a splendid table, and from all the other advantages or appearances of fortune, compared to the warm, solid content, the swelling satisfaction, the thrilling transports, and the exulting triumphs which a good mind enjoys in the contemplation of a generous, virtuous, noble, benevolent action? — HENRY FIELDING.

WHILE most modern readers are more or less acquainted with the genius of Henry Fielding, there are some who perhaps imagine that style and invention in novel-writing have so much improved in the past hundred and sixty-odd years, since Fielding's death, that to read his works in this advanced age would be equivalent to going back and reviewing our school primers. It used to be a juvenile maxim at school, "A master outgrown is a master outshone;" but as Fielding said of another

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equally sound maxim, the one objection to it is, that it is not true. Fielding has been much quoted and imitated, but for sound philosophy, piquancy of style and accuracy in portraying human nature in all its phases he has never been outshone by any of his pupils or successors. As one of the first exponents of the English novel he set a standard in prose, like Milton and Shakespeare in poetry, that has never been excelled, and rarely equalled, by moderns. Later writers have no more improved upon his style than modern poets have improved upon Shakespeare's.

Some of Fielding's book characters were addicted to certain moral infirmities peculiar to the human species, and furthermore they were exceedingly plain-spoken at times. These propensities, although very natural, have doubtless operated against a good opinion of his works in the minds of such persons as have to contend with an unduly fastidious taste, or in other words, whose delicate sensibilities are severely shocked by word-pictures and expressions which, although in common enough use by realistic writers in Fielding's time, are not so commonly employed in

the polite literature of our day. But Fielding's works were not designed for those who would blush for classic Venus or Apollo. In writing of Fielding's immortal work, *Tom Jones*, Coleridge said: "A young man whose heart or feelings can be injured, or even his passions excited by this novel, is already thoroughly corrupt."

In like manner as the styles in architecture have undergone many changes, so has the literary method of treating with epithets and morals been greatly modified. But as the architectural beauty of many of the old monuments and cathedrals has not been surpassed in modern times, so have the literary edifices built by Fielding stood the test of time, while other later and more pretentious ones have crumbled and been forgotten; and the following prophecy by the renowned Gibbon seems destined to be fulfilled: "The successors of Charles V may disdain their brethren of England, but the romance of *Tom Jones*, that exquisite picture of humor and manners, will outlive the palace of the Escorial and the Imperial Eagle of Austria."

Literary style having largely superseded Nature, the more artful writers no longer

permit their characters of the lower order to speak in their own vernacular, or to conduct themselves as they customarily do in real life; but instead they choose for them only such language and behavior as will accord with the more punctilious taste of the reader, oftentimes with a fine disregard of its appropriateness to the character it is meant to typify. However praiseworthy this modern habit of restraint and artificiality may be, the fact still remains, that the vital spark of longevity in literature is its faithfulness to Nature, — whose countenance has really undergone no very marked change since Fielding's time. A book character with no human frailties must of necessity be but a sketchy outline, bearing only a superficial likeness to the original; and since most people convey a more accurate idea of their true natures by their unrestrained acts and conversation than is to be gained by what others may say of them, it was Fielding's practice to permit his characters the utmost spontaneity of speech and action. He says: "I am firmly of the opinion that there is neither spirit nor good sense in oaths, nor any wit or humor

in blasphemy. But vulgar errors require an abler pen than mine to correct."

"It is a trite but true observation," says Fielding, "that examples work more forcibly on the mind than precepts; and if this be just in what is odious and blameable, it is more strongly so in what is amiable and praiseworthy." While children are now-a-days taught affirmatively by good example, many renowned writers of the past used to employ the negative method of reproofing evil by force of bad example—by setting forth immoral acts and evil situations in their worst phases and illustrating their inevitably bad consequences. There is no reason why the former of these two principles should be adopted to the exclusion of the latter, for in equal measure as we should learn to accomplish what is noble and praiseworthy, we should learn to avoid what is ignoble and blameworthy.

It is the theory of some persons that certain forms of vice are naturally alluring to a young and impressionable mind; and that the unsophisticated should be left to discover for themselves that there is such a thing as vice in the world. They might

also by the same tenet be left to find out for themselves that there is a retribution hereafter. Mystery invites investigation; and as a secret withheld excites double the interest of a secret disclosed, so does concealment of vice arouse a curiosity to pry into it. Therefore, as children — and some grown people as well — entertain the belief that they are privileged to appropriate to themselves whatever they find, it may be that the ancient writers were more far-seeing than we suspect, in discovering immorality and other conspicuous faults in their contemporaries and laying them before their readers. We may, however, except Rabelais, and Balzac in his *Contes Drolatiques*; for the thoughts of these two writers are as wont to follow in the channels of vulgarity and lasciviousness as the inclinations of a duck are to follow a path leading to a pool of stagnant water.

Doubtless the most efficacious method of teaching a child to avoid a hot stove is to introduce it to that object and demonstrate that it will burn if touched; for assuredly a child could not be more convincingly taught what a hot stove is,

and that it will surely burn, than by seeing it tested. As a knowledge of the law is one's surest safeguard against plunging headlong into litigation, so also a familiarity with the moral pitfalls in life is the most helpful means of preventing people from stumbling into them.

It is a debatable question whether the promise of reward for good deeds, or the fear of punishment for bad ones, is the strongest deterrent to wrong-doing, though it may be contended that even the most alluring promises of health, happiness and prosperity will not assist one in combating a bad distemper, either of body or mind.

Although Fielding makes no pretention of being an ethical instructor, yet in his works improper conduct and mean dispositions in men and women are frequently employed, rather as a means of conspicuously proving their own unhappy results than to gratify the morbid sensibilities of readers. His characters are veritable word-pictures taken from living models, and his situations are portrayed mainly from scenes enacted in real life. Notwithstanding the plain language and unchaste actions attrib-

uted to some of them, literature contains no record of a mind more instinctively antagonistic to meanness, hypocrisy and knavery, or more persistent in its advocacy of kindness, charity and upright dealings, than we find in the author of *Tom Jones*. Furthermore, he has set forth his own varied experiences and his outlook upon life in such an absorbing narrative form that the reader is highly entertained by a good story, filled with thrilling incident, romance and adventure, and pointed with an abundance of forceful maxims, and is made to feel the elevating force of the moral without being made conscious of any moral preaching.

Fielding was pretty much in accord with Swift in believing that the majority of mankind derive greater pleasure from being diverted than instructed, but he says in a short essay, which is printed herein, that "Letters were surely intended for a much more noble and profitable purpose than this." He was aware of his own literary talents, and like Horace, Vergil and others long before him, he did not hesitate to predict a place for his works in the estimation of posterity; in which

prognostication, as he was no inferior writer, he proved to be no inferior prophet.

At the very outset Fielding sets a lively pace for his characters, and he seldom permits them to waste their time or that of the reader in viewing the scenery, or to rest from their duties of edifying the audience, except for occasional digressions, or when he himself intervenes with a clinching argumentative apothegm to lend emphasis to some point or incident. As all brooks and rivers flow on toward an objective, so do the actions and conversations of Fielding's characters lead to some purpose, — such as amusement, instruction or character-study; and his writings are happily free from a wearisome redundancy of inane chitchat and empty tittle-tattle. If the action threatens to drag he is ever ready to quicken the movement by engaging some of his militant actors in a lively altercation or a highly amusing brawl, usually at some country inn, whereat the combatants always engage with Spartan courage, generally at the expense of hair, wearing apparel, and personal dignity. His combats, which are usually impromptu, are always irregular,

ungloved affairs, and the participants hastily arm themselves with whatever implement of warfare is most conveniently at hand, whether it be a cane, sword, broom, frying-pan, a piece of bed-room china, or only their tongues and bare fists. Even old parson Adams (in *Joseph Andrews*) is made sufficiently human to forget his cloth occasionally and lend a free hand on the side of justice, if not of discretion, in these desultory encounters, — as for example, on one occasion when he and his traveling companion, Joseph Andrews, arrived at a country inn kept by an ill-mated pair. Joseph, who was suffering from a bruised knee occasioned by a bad fall, repaired to the kitchen, where he was being attended by parson Adams and the good landlady, when the bellicose spouse entered. “This surly fellow,” says Fielding, “who always proportioned his respect to the appearance of a traveller, from ‘God bless your honour,’ down to plain ‘Coming presently,’ observing his wife on her knees to a footman, cried out, without considering his circumstances, ‘What a pox is the woman about? Why don’t you mind the company in the

coach? Go and ask them what they will have for dinner.'

"'My dear,' says she, 'you know they can have nothing but what is at the fire, which will be ready presently; and really the poor young man's leg is very much bruised.' At which words she fell to chafing more violently than before: the bell then happening to ring, he damn'd his wife, and bid her go in to the company, and not stand rubbing there all day, for he did not believe the young fellow's leg was so bad as he pretended; and if it was, within twenty miles he would find a surgeon to cut it off. Upon these words, Adams fetched two strides across the room; and snapping his fingers over his head, muttered aloud, He would excommunicate such a wretch for a farthing, for he believed the devil had more humanity. These words occasioned a dialogue between Adams and the host, in which there were two or three sharp replies, till Joseph bade the latter know how to behave himself to his betters. At which the host (having first strictly surveyed Adams) scornfully repeating the word 'betters,' flew into a rage, and, telling Joseph he was as able to walk out of his

house as he had been to walk into it, offered to lay violent hands on him; which perceiving, Adams dealt him so sound a compliment over his face with his fist, that the blood immediately gushed out of his nose in a stream. The host, being unwilling to be outdone in courtesy, especially by a person of Adams's figure, returned the favour with so much gratitude, that the parson's nostrils began to look a little redder than usual. Upon which Adams again assailed his antagonist, and with another stroke laid him sprawling on the floor.

"The hostess, who was a better wife than so surly a husband deserved, seeing her husband all bloody and stretched along, hastened presently to his assistance, or rather to revenge the blow, which, to all appearance, was the last he would ever receive; when, lo! a pan full of hog's blood, which unluckily stood on the dresser, presented itself first to her hands. She seized it in her fury, and without any reflection, discharged it into the parson's face; and with so good an aim, that much the greater part first saluted his countenance, and trickled thence in so large a current down to his beard, and over his garments, that

a more horrible spectacle was hardly to be seen, or even imagined. All which was perceived by Mrs. Slipslop, who entered the kitchen at that instant. This good gentlewoman, not being of a temper so extremely cool and patient as perhaps was required to ask many questions on this occasion, flew with great impetuosity at the hostess's cap, which, together with some of her hair, she plucked from her head in a moment, giving her, at the same time, several hearty cuffs in the face; which by frequent practice on the inferior servants, she had learned an excellent knack of delivering with a good grace. Poor Joseph could hardly rise from his chair; the parson was employed in wiping the blood from his eyes, which had entirely blinded him; and the landlord was but just beginning to stir; whilst Mrs. Slipslop, holding down the landlady's face with her left hand, made so dexterous an use of her right, that the poor woman began to roar, in a key which alarmed all the company in the inn. . . .

“The principal figure, and which engaged the eyes of all, was Adams, who was all over covered with blood, which the whole company concluded to be his own,

and consequently imagined him no longer for this world. But the host, who had now recovered from his blow, and was risen from the ground, soon delivered them from this apprehension, by damning his wife for wasting the hog's puddings, and telling her all would have been very well if she had not intermeddled, like a b— as she was; adding, he was very glad the gentlewoman had paid her, though not half what she deserved. The poor woman had indeed fared much the worst; having, besides the unmerciful cuffs received, lost a quantity of hair, which Mrs. Slipslop in triumph held in her left hand."

It is doubtful if Fielding, any more than parson Adams, could have quite reconciled himself to a free practice of that laudable virtue of "turning the other cheek" to an adversary who had smote him on one side; although it is to be observed that in most of the battles where his heroes are involved they are found to be avenging injuries or affronts to others, rather than to themselves. Possibly Fielding may have construed the Biblical injunction as applying only to the injured one, and not to any third party who might be inclined to insist

upon fair play, or to administer a well-deserved rebuke. At any rate, if our author indulges his pen rather freely in disputes and combats they seem for the most part to arise from justifiable provocations; furthermore, they serve a purpose in showing the pugnacity of human nature—a quality by no means extinct in the present age. Indeed a surprisingly large percentage of the famous characters in history have distinguished themselves as fighters or writers; and there have been others, perhaps less distinguished, who have doubted which of these two classes of celebrities is the more useful to the human race. It might be argued negatively in behalf of the latter class, that if there were fewer fighters, more happiness would be found in a correspondingly reduced demand for their talents. On the other hand, there would be a lessened need of writing to celebrate their prowess. Therefore these two classes seem not only to vie with each other for supremacy in numbers, but they lean heavily upon each other to support the lustre of their fame. That they are regarded by some as representing two distinctly separate

vocations is proved by Fielding, who records an instance where a poet having obtruded himself into a fight and finding that he was likely to become bested in the fray, he withdrew upon having suddenly bethought himself that it was his business to *record* heroic actions, rather than to take part in them.

It happens that grown-ups, no less than boys, occasionally relish a fight — provided they are not directly involved therein — and Fielding therefore made frequent use of this diversion in his novels as a method of amusing his readers. He also had a happy way of assigning this feature of his entertainment to such artists as are most likely to please his audience, not so much with their fistic cleverness as with the variety and grotesqueness of their performance; nor did he scruple to enlist the feminine as well as the masculine sex in the midst of the action, thus producing what might properly be termed “mixed bouts.” Fielding was apparently no advocate of the theory that quarrelling and fighting are heroic attributes in which the gentler sex are denied the right of participation, and to prove the contrary he usually

kept in his troupe one or more hardy Amazonians who could be relied upon to give a fairly good account of themselves, when occasion required. He has, moreover, dealt with almost every phase of human life, from the highest nobleman — with all that that name implies — down to the meanest rogue, and in a manner so realistic as to leave no doubt in the mind of the reader that he not only knew their characteristics, but he knew precisely the language and deportment with which to characterize them. Upon this point Fielding observes that the knowledge of an author “must be universal; that is, with all ranks and degrees of men; for the knowledge of what is called high life will not instruct him in low; nor, *e converso*, will his being acquainted with the inferior part of mankind teach him the manners of the superior.”

In Fielding's works the relationship of debtor and creditor, of judge and criminal, of gaol-keeper and prisoner, of master and servant, of lover and loved one, of husband and wife, of parent and child, of guardian and ward, of friend and enemy, of host and guest, of teacher and pupil, of physi-

cian and patient, of lawyer and client, of pastor and parishioner, are all interwoven in the plots of his stories and all are treated respectively in their noblest and meanest aspects. Nor was his great versatility and learning derived wholly from reading and distant observation; he is said to have spent much of his early life in the midst of a fast set, and he was not a stranger to the squalor and the gaols in which some of his book characters languished. His hard experiences with bailiffs, gaol-keepers and poverty, and in later life his office of Justice of the Peace in London, his contact with criminals and with persons of distinction, his keen faculties of observation, his alert sense of humor, his trained judicial mind, and his natural powers of characterization all combined to make him not only one of the "sanest observers," but one of the greatest portrayers "of human nature who ever lived." He was a kind, affectionate husband; a devoted, indulgent parent; and a staunch, jovial friend. His works are a veritable storehouse of erudition, filled with precepts, similes and character-studies, which have been alike the ambition and despair

of numberless imitators for upwards of a hundred years. His writings, like the histrionic talents of a great actor, although having the appearance of ease in execution, are nevertheless difficult to imitate. As a bee, with its marvelous and incomprehensible faculties, converts the essence from a great variety of flowers into honey which it stores in its hive, so Fielding gathered his experiences and observations from all walks in life, as well as from the works of learned writers, and coördinated them into useful knowledge and entertainment which he stored up in volumes for the edification of future generations. While poets have perpetuated their fame by singing the praises of great heroes and chronicling momentous events in the world's history, the novelist Fielding gained renown by his accurate and humorous depiction of human nature as he found it existent in his own day, — and just about as we now find it existent among ourselves — indeed, to such an extent that it appears at times as if Fielding had projected himself into futurity and settled in our midst. And speaking of poets, it may be remarked that although we are a great and indus-

trious race, our achievements, if not our morals — like the heroic qualities of many great men who preceded Agamemnon — are in some danger of being forgotten. —

Ere Agamemnon many a hero lived,
But all in darkness bide while ages pass,
Unknown, unwept, and lost to story,
Lacking the aid of a sacred bard.

And yet, while Fielding's epigrammatic style is comparatively easy of comprehension, his art, like that of a great painter, requires some understanding in order fully to appreciate it. He is preëminently a writer for thinking people. His keen wit and caustic satire are oftentimes so closely veiled as to escape the observation of the hasty or unthinking reader. As a mirrored reflection of the customs, vices and virtues of his own time the works of Fielding are unrivalled; as a virile story-teller he is scarcely to be excelled; as a philosopher he is deep, resourceful and convincing; and the doctrine of charity, the brotherhood of man and the uplifting of the human race are major chords that vibrate throughout all his works, — as, for example, the following speech made by the young hero in *Joseph Andrews*. Per-

haps Fielding himself would have willingly admitted that "men build fine houses, purchase fine furniture, pictures, clothes and other things," from other motives than that of "an ambition to be respected more than other people," but Joseph was an unlettered boy, and if the first few lines of his argument are not convincing, the latter part certainly expresses the author's own views. He argues thus:—

"What inspires a man to build fine houses, to purchase fine furniture, pictures, clothes, and other things, at a great expense, but an ambition to be respected more than other people? Now, would not one great act of charity, one instance of redeeming a poor family from all the miseries of poverty, restoring an unfortunate tradesman by a sum of money to the means of procuring a livelihood by his industry, discharging an undone debtor from his debts or a gaol, or any such-like examples of goodness, create a man more honour and respect than he could acquire by the finest house, furniture, pictures, or clothes, that were ever beheld? For not only the object himself who was thus relieved, but all who heard the name

of such a person, must, I imagine, reverence him infinitely more than the possessor of all those other things."

On this head, Fielding himself remarks, — "I have, in truth, observed, and shall never have a better opportunity than at present to communicate my observation, that the world are in general divided into two opinions concerning charity, which are the very reverse of each other. One party seems to hold, that all acts of this kind are to be esteemed as voluntary gifts, and however little you give (if indeed no more than your good wishes), you acquire a great degree of merit in so doing. Others, on the contrary, appear to be as firmly persuaded that beneficence is a positive duty, and that whenever the rich fall greatly short of their ability in relieving the distress of the poor, their pitiful largesses are so far from being meritorious, that they have only performed their duty by halves, and are in some sense more contemptible than those who have entirely neglected it.

"To reconcile these different opinions is not in my power. I shall only add, that the givers are generally of the former

sentiment, and the receivers are almost universally inclined to the latter."

Consummate perfection in authorship is a quality never yet discovered; not only because there is no such thing, but if there were, the diversity of taste is such that a unanimous opinion could never be reached. As to Fielding, the one outstanding blemish on his works is his propensity for indulging his characters now and then in long extraneous narratives, and — especially the more learned figures — in elaborate argumentative discourses on abstruse or doctrinal observations. However much these lengthy recitals and scholarly discussions may typify or elucidate the characters from whose mouths they issue, they often weary the reader, in the first instance with their irrelevancy, and in the second instance with over-much erudition; and they serve as stumbling-blocks that halt the otherwise rapid and cohesive movement of his stories. In those days the art of "filling" (in which more recent writers have attained so high a degree of excellence) was not uncommon, and even Jonathan Swift caustically refers to it as an accomplishment not to be despised,

since it "makes a very considerable addition to the bulk of the volume; a circumstance by no means to be neglected by a skillful writer."

Fortunately, however, Fielding's wordy digressions are not only infrequent, but they are mostly set apart in chapters by themselves and are so marked by captions that they may be passed over without losing any thread of the main story or lessening one's comprehension of his plots, which are otherwise comparatively free from incumbrance. His stories are filled with lively episodes, absorbing mysteries and agreeable surprises which are unfolded to the reader at frequent intervals, and only the main secret is withheld to be revealed at the end. But above all else, it is the inimitable style and good-humor of Fielding that delights the reader — with an abundance of wholesome laughter and an occasional tear. Sometimes when you are confronted with some scene or conversation which threatens to become tiresome the author has a felicitous way of drawing the curtain, with the remark that he has no idea what the actors did or said, and as it could be of no interest to

the reader he did not take the pains to inquire. Or, occasionally after a short curtain speech, he apologizes for the obtrusion by some explanation, such, for instance, as remarking, that as he could not prevail upon any of his characters to make the speech, he was obliged to make it himself.

There is perhaps nothing which brings an author more closely in touch with our personal sympathies than the delineation of thoughts, sensations and actions the like of which we ourselves have entertained, or commonly observed in others. It establishes a sort of kindred feeling between the author and the reader, who is wont to halt and consider, "Now, isn't that true to human nature!" or, "How often have I observed that myself!" In short, we are prone to admire the sayings of others — especially those whom we consider greater than ourselves — when their expressed views accord perfectly with our own, for we are thereby doubly assured of the soundness of their wisdom. Or, in other words, a wise thought which we have nurtured in our own bosom (or brain), and to which we claim a sort of proprietor-

ship, if expressed by an exalted personage is apt to be more relished than if we hear it repeated by a dunce. Fielding's writings are so true to human nature that the reader of his stories finds himself constantly laying claim to the author's philosophies, and felicitating himself that he and Fielding are so much alike in thought.¹

The ancient writers had a knack of addressing remarks "to the reader" with a familiarity which seems not to beget that individual's contempt — an ingredient that he seldom fails to bestow upon a modern author who takes any such liberties. This tolerant attitude and the reverence for the sayings of apotheosized poets and philosophers may be attributed to a very common trait of human nature, viz., as the greater part of the human race would scorn to imitate, or be imitated by, those whom they consider beneath them in intellect and worldly station, so on the other hand would they swell with pride on discovering that their thoughts follow in the same channels with those of great

¹ Queen Elisabeth (Carmen Sylva), of Roumania, said that her greatest ambition was to write in such a way that all who read might think they wrote it themselves.

historical personages. Or, to paraphrase one of Fielding's remarks, a man would disdain to be the companion of a beggar, though he would be proud to be likened unto a great man. Not that modern writers are to be classed with beggars, but their works are unseasoned by time, their fame is unripened, and alas, like blighted fruit, in many cases it falls before reaching maturity.

Like many another writer whose pen has won him renown, Fielding had his contemporary critics and jealous rivals; and to those he occasionally paid his respects, particularly in his *Tom Jones* and *Amelia*; but most of those who presumed to criticise his work have for many generations enjoyed an unchallenged sleep in oblivion, and as the sturdy oak towers above the underbrush, so his fame rises far above all those who sought to make him the target of their ridicule. Swift, who enjoyed no immunity from these tantalizing literary appendages, said of them: "A true critic, in the perusal of a book, is like a dog at a feast, whose thoughts and stomach are wholly set upon what the guests fling away, and consequently is apt

to snarl most when there are the fewest bones."

It has also been the unhappy fate of most geniuses to wrestle with poverty and die poor; and Fielding was no exception to this rule. Indeed the last chapter of his life is exceedingly pathetic. Upon the appearance of *Joseph Andrews* his literary genius became at once apparent, and for a considerable time thereafter he is said to have lived upon the bounty of one or more great and noble men who supported him in the interest of Letters; but after his appointment as Justice of the Peace in London, it being generally supposed that the emoluments of that office were very large, the sustaining hand was withdrawn and he was left to shift for himself. His innate sympathies for the poor wretches with whom his office brought him in contact were such that he declined to take fees from those who could ill afford to pay them, and his income from this source amounted to a beggarly three hundred pounds a year with which to pay his faithful clerk and sustain himself and a numerous family. Then, in the prime of life, he was seized with a complication of diseases,

including dropsy, gout, jaundice and asthma, so that he could neither stand nor sit nor lie down in comfort. "These ailments," says Fielding, "united their forces in the destruction of a body so entirely emaciated that it had lost all its muscular flesh." Receiving no encouragement from his physician, he resigned himself to the inevitable, but not without the most harrowing mental tortures (which he says far exceeded his bodily pain), in being doomed to die and leave his wife and little children utterly without any means of support. Having been informed by his physician that he could not possibly survive the rigors of another English winter he took a sad leave of his little ones, well knowing that he should never see them again, and accompanied by his devoted wife and eldest daughter he boarded a sailing vessel for Lisbon, in the hope that he might sustain life long enough to write some additional piece to leave as a legacy to his loved ones. By this time he had lost the use of his limbs, and could scarce hold a pen to write. "Upon my entrance into the boat," he says, "I presented a spectacle of the highest horror. The total loss of

limbs was apparent to all who saw me." His face was so attenuated and colorless that it presented a "picture of death itself. Indeed, so ghastly was my countenance that timorous women with child had abstained from my house, for fear of the ill consequences of looking at me." During the short space of time left to him he strove valiantly to ward off death until he could complete his last work, which he entitled "A Voyage to Lisbon." The picture of this poor hopeless, pain-ridden mortal, bravely struggling to rally the last fragments of an erstwhile brilliant genius and robust physique, and laboring with all his feeble might to provide some little sustenance for his family, while the impatient Grim Reaper waited upon him, almost at his very door, presents a truly affecting scene. After all his persistent advocacy of charity and human kindness, followed by his unremitting labors in the interest of public welfare, he was stricken down in the prime of his vigor and usefulness with nothing but his literary fame to leave as a heritage to his dependent family. All England had laughed with him and enjoyed his wit and humor, but Fate decreed

that in his poverty and intense anguish he should suffer almost alone. He died soon after arriving at Lisbon.

The following lines appeared in the publisher's Foreword to Fielding's last work, which was "begun in pain, and finished almost at the same period with life:"

"Your candour is desired on the perusal of the following sheets, as they are the product of a genius that has long been your delight and entertainment. It must be acknowledged that a lamp almost burnt out does not give so steady and uniform a light as when it blazes in its full vigour; but yet it is well known that by its wavering, as if struggling against its own dissolution, it sometimes darts a ray as bright as ever. In like manner, a strong and lively genius will, in its last struggles, sometimes mount aloft, and throw forth the most striking marks of its original lustre."

And so it was with Fielding; some of the most brilliant flashes of his expiring genius scintillate throughout the pages of his final work, in which there is scarcely a note of personal complaint.

But since words are about as futile in

satisfying the reader concerning the talents of a great writer as a dissertation on cookery would be in appeasing hunger, or as our author's fame was in providing bread for his family, I shall here adopt Fielding's borrowed maxim, which he says is "trite,¹ but true;" that "examples operate more forcibly on the mind than precepts." I therefore append hereto a considerable number of examples from Fielding's writings, which will doubtless "operate more forcibly" on the reader's mind than an overdose of panegyric. It may be explained that these selections, although made at random from Fielding's various works, are for the most part complete in themselves.

Nor are these passages — excepting only the first few — given for the purpose of merely acquainting the reader with Fielding's style. To that end a few pages would suffice; but the object in printing so great a number is to furnish an interesting compendium for thoughtful readers who may have neither time nor inclination to read Fielding's works in their entirety.

¹ A very great number of Fielding's arguments and illustrative maxims are original with him, but no matter how commonplace an adage may be it seldom appears trite if happily applied.

The book is intended to be read, not as a connected story, but as one would read a book of short poems, or essays, each embodying some separate thought or story worthy of the reader's interest. The pages contain much food for thought, in many cases amply garnished with genuine amusement; and furthermore they afford a singularly attractive study of one of the most virile and interesting figures in English literature. His philosophy is both salutary and admonitory; it is easily comprehended, and it lends itself readily to the everyday needs and experiences of every individual, of whatsoever vocation in life.

For example, he writes, —

“Men of true wisdom and goodness are contented to take persons and things as they are, without complaining of their imperfections, or attempting to amend them. They can see a fault in a friend, a relation, or an acquaintance, without ever mentioning it to the parties themselves, or to any others; and this often without lessening their affection. Indeed, unless great discernment be tempered with this overlooking disposition, we ought never to contract friendship but

with a degree of folly which we can deceive; for I hope my friends will pardon me when I declare, I know none of them without a fault; and I should be sorry if I could imagine I had any friend who could not see mine. Forgiveness of this kind we give and demand in turn. It is an exercise of friendship, and perhaps none of the least pleasant. And this forgiveness we must bestow, without desire of amendment. There is, perhaps, no surer mark of folly, than an attempt to correct the natural infirmities of those we love. The finest composition of human nature, as well as the finest china, may have a flaw in it; and this, I am afraid, in either case, is equally incurable; though, nevertheless, the pattern may remain of the highest value."

"Reader, if thou hast any good wishes towards me, I will fully repay them by wishing thee to be possessed of a sanguine disposition of mind; since, after having read much and considered long on that subject of happiness which hath employed so many great pens, I am almost inclined to fix it in the possession of this temper; which puts us, in a manner, out of the

reach of Fortune, and makes us happy without her assistance. Indeed, the sensations of pleasure it gives are much more constant as well as much keener, than those which that blind lady bestows; nature having wisely contrived, that some satiety and languor should be annexed to all our real enjoyments, lest we should be so taken up by them, as to be stopt from further pursuits. I make no manner of doubt but that, in this light, we may see the imaginary future chancellor just called to the bar, the archbishop in crape, and the prime minister at the tail of an opposition, more truly happy than those who are invested with all the power and profit of those respective offices.”

Again he says: “There are several ceremonies instituted among the polished part of mankind, which, though they may to coarser judgments appear as mere matters of form, are found to have much of substance in them by the more discerning. . . . It hath been a custom long established in the polite world, and that upon very solid and substantial reasons, that a husband shall never enter his wife’s apartment without first knocking at the door.

The many excellent uses of this custom need scarce be hinted to a reader who hath any knowledge of the world."

This passage, which forms a complete epigram, is aptly applied to an episode where an irate husband who, in pursuing a run-away wife, stopped late one night at a country inn where he thought she had put up. He bribed the chambermaid to show him to his wife's room, but that wily functionary — possibly having received a more generous fee from the lady herself — led the impassioned husband to the bed-chamber door of another couple. Fielding says: "Knock, indeed, he did at the door, but not one of those gentle raps which is usual on such occasions. On the contrary, when he found the door locked he flew at it with such violence that the lock immediately gave way, the door burst open, and he fell headlong into the room."

This rude and noisy action not only aroused his wife in another part of the house and enabled her to make her escape, but it came near costing the intruder his life, all of which he might have obviated had he read and observed Fielding's proverb.

A marked feature of Fielding's writings is, that people never rap or tap gently at the door; they always thunder or pound uproariously from without — so much so that the occupants of the room or house are usually thrown into consternation, in which the reader in viewing the situation from within is inclined to join with as much curiosity and apprehension as the occupants themselves.

“There is a certain air of natural gentility,” says Fielding, “which is neither in the power of dress to give, nor to conceal.” This he applied to the not very well dressed Tom Jones, who he said was “possessed of it to a very eminent degree. . . . Mr. Jones was now in a situation, which sometimes happens to be the case of young gentlemen of much better figure than himself. In short, he had not one penny in his pocket; a situation in much greater credit among the ancient philosophers than among the modern wise men who live in Lombard Street, or those who frequent White’s Chocolate-house. And, perhaps, the great honours which those philosophers have ascribed to an empty pocket may be one of the reasons of that

high contempt in which they are held in the aforesaid street and Chocolate-house.

“Now if the ancient opinion, that men might live very comfortably on virtue only, be, as the modern wise men just above-mentioned pretend to have discovered, a notorious error; no less false is, I apprehend, that position of some writers of romance, that a man can live altogether on love; for however delicious repasts this may afford to some of our senses or appetites, it is most certain it can afford none to others. Those, therefore, who have placed too great a confidence in such writers, have experienced their error when it was too late; and have found that love was no more capable of allaying hunger than a rose is capable of delighting the ear, or a violin of gratifying the smell.” And Fielding himself had good reason to appreciate the soundness of this philosophy; for as Horace observed, —

Duramque callet pauperiem pati —

He knows by experience how to endure stern poverty.

“There is scarce anything,” says Fielding, “which so happily introduces men to our good liking, as having conceived

some alarm at their first appearance; when once those apprehensions begin to vanish we soon forget the fears which they occasioned, and look on ourselves as indebted for our present ease to those very persons who at first raised our fears. Thus it happened to Nightingale, who no sooner found that Jones had no demand on him, as he suspected, than he began to be pleased with his presence."

Again: "Nothing more aggravates ill success than the near approach to good. The gamester who loses his party at piquet by a single point laments his bad luck ten times as much as he who never came within a prospect of the game. So in a lottery, the proprietors of the next numbers to that which wins the great prize are apt to account themselves much more unfortunate than their fellow-sufferers. In short, these kind of hair-breadth missings of happiness look like the insults of Fortune, who may be considered as thus playing tricks with us, and wantonly diverting herself at our expense."

This he applied as follows: "Jones, who more than once already had experienced this frolicsome disposition of the heathen

goddess, was now again doomed to be tantalized in the like manner;" for (in searching for his lost Sophia) "he arrived at the door of Mrs. Fitzpatrick about ten minutes after Sophia's departure."

Another instance: "I remember a wise old gentleman who used to say, 'When children are doing nothing, they are doing mischief.' I will not enlarge this quaint saying to the most beautiful part of the creation in general; but so far I may be allowed, that when the effects of female jealousy do not appear openly in their proper colours of rage and fury, we may suspect that mischievous passion to be at work privately, and attempting to undermine what it doth not attack above-ground." Which was used as a prelude to the following sentence:—

"This was exemplified in the conduct of Lady Bellaston, who, under all the smiles which she wore in her countenance, concealed much indignation against Sophia; and as she plainly saw that this young lady stood between her and the full indulgence of her desires, she resolved to get rid of her by some means or other; nor was it long before a very favourable oppor-

tunity of accomplishing this presented itself to her.”

It is curious to note what a low estimate was set upon the talent and usefulness of country parsons in Fielding's time, — if their annual stipend may be used as a criterion. The following passage refers to the immortal Parson Adams, whom Fielding made one of the foremost characters in literature: —

“His virtue, and his other qualifications, as they rendered him equal to his office, so they made him an agreeable and valuable companion, and so much endeared and well recommended him to a bishop, that at the age of fifty he was provided with a handsome income of twenty-three pounds a year; which, however, he could not make any great figure with, because he lived in a dear country, and was a little encumbered with a wife and six children.”

This same parson Adams is later reported as having come upon a villain in the act of attacking a defenceless woman, and with a vigor and sense of justice that did credit to his calling he immediately took a hand in the fray — which afforded Field-

ing an occasion for the following disquisition on the human skull: —

“The great abilities of Mr. Adams were not necessary to have formed a right judgment of this affair on the first sight. He did not therefore want the entreaties of the poor wretch to assist her; but, lifting up his crabstick, he immediately levelled a blow at that part of the ravisher’s head where, according to the opinion of the ancients, the brains of some persons are deposited, and which he had undoubtedly let forth, had not Nature (who, as wise men have observed, equips all creatures with what is most expedient for them) taken a provident care (as she always doth with those she intends for encounters) to make this part of the head three times as thick as those of ordinary men who are designed to exercise talents which are vulgarly called rational, and for whom, as brains are necessary, she is obliged to leave some room for them in the cavity of the skull; whereas, those ingredients being entirely useless to persons of the heroic calling, she hath an opportunity of thickening the bone, so as to make it less subject to any impression, or liable

to be cracked or broken; and indeed, in some who are predestined to the command of armies and empires, she is supposed sometimes to make that part perfectly solid.”

From here on, in order to avoid the constant repetition of quotation marks, we shall use brackets for all introductory remarks, headings and notes not belonging to Fielding himself.

AN ESSAY TO PROVE THAT AN AUTHOR WILL
WRITE THE BETTER FOR HAVING SOME
KNOWLEDGE OF THE SUBJECT ON
WHICH HE WRITES

As several gentlemen in these times, by the wonderful force of genius only, without the least assistance of learning, perhaps without being well able to read, have made a considerable figure in the republic of letters; the modern critics, I am told, have lately begun to assert, that all kind of learning is entirely useless to a writer; and, indeed, no other than a kind of fetters on the natural sprightliness and activity of the imagination, which is thus weighed down, and prevented from soaring to those high flights which otherwise it would be able to reach.

This doctrine, I am afraid, is at present carried much too far: for why should writing differ so much from all other arts? The nimbleness of a dancing-master is not at all prejudiced by being taught to move; nor doth any mechanic, I believe, exercise

his tools the worse by having learnt to use them. For my own part, I cannot conceive that Homer or Virgil would have writ with more fire, if instead of being masters of all the learning of their times, they had been as ignorant as most of the authors of the present age. Nor do I believe that all the imagination, fire, and judgment of Pitt could have produced those orations that have made the senate of England, in these our times, a rival in eloquence to Greece and Rome, if he had not been so well read in the writings of Demosthenes and Cicero, as to have transferred their whole spirit into his speeches, and, with their spirit, their knowledge too.

I would not here be understood to insist on the same fund of learning in any of my brethren, as Cicero persuades us is necessary to the composition of an orator. On the contrary, very little reading is, I conceive, necessary to the poet, less to the critic, and the least of all to the politician. For the first, perhaps, Byshe's *Art of Poetry*, and a few of our modern poets, may suffice; for the second, a moderate heap of plays; and, for the last, an indifferent collection of political journals.

To say the truth, I require no more than that a man should have some little knowledge of the subject on which he treats, according to the old maxim of law, *Quam quisque nōrit artem in eâ se exerceat*. With this alone a writer may sometimes do tolerably well; and, indeed, without this, all the other learning in the world will stand him in little stead.

For instance, let us suppose that Homer and Virgil, Aristotle and Cicero, Thucydides and Livy, could have met all together, and have clubbed their several talents to have composed a treatise on the art of dancing: I believe it will be readily agreed they could not have equalled the excellent treatise which Mr. Essex hath given us on that subject, entitled, *The Rudiments of Genteel Education*.

And, indeed, should the excellent Mr. Broughton be prevailed on to set fist to paper, and to complete the above-said rudiments, by delivering down the true principles of athletics, I question whether the world will have any cause to lament, that none of the great writers, either antient or modern, have ever treated about that noble and useful art.

To avoid a multiplicity of examples in so plain a case, and to come at once to my point, I am apt to conceive, that one reason why many English writers have totally failed in describing the manners of upper life, may possibly be, that in reality they know nothing of it.

This is a knowledge unhappily not in the power of many authors to arrive at. Books will give us a very imperfect idea of it; nor will the stage a much better: the fine gentleman formed upon reading the former will almost always turn out a pedant, and he who forms himself upon the latter, a coxcomb.

Nor are the characters drawn from these models better supported. Vanbrugh and Congreve copied nature; but they who copy them draw as unlike the present age as Hogarth would do if he was to paint a rout or a drum in the dresses of Titian and of Vandyke. In short, imitation here will not do the business. The picture must be after Nature herself. A true knowledge of the world is gained only by conversation, and the manners of every rank must be seen in order to be known.

Now it happens that this higher order

of mortals is not to be seen, like all the rest of the human species, for nothing, in the streets, shops, and coffee-houses: nor are they shown, like the upper rank of animals, for so much a-piece. In short, this is a sight to which no persons are admitted without one or other of these qualifications, viz., either birth or fortune, or, what is equivalent to both, the honourable profession of a gamester. And, very unluckily for the world, persons so qualified very seldom care to take upon themselves the bad trade of writing; which is generally entered upon by the lower and poorer sort, as it is a trade which many think requires no kind of stock to set up with.

Hence those strange monsters in lace and embroidery, in silks and brocades, with vast wigs and hoops; which, under the name of lords and ladies, strut the stage, to the great delight of attorneys and their clerks in the pit, and of the citizens and their apprentices in the galleries; and which are no more to be found in real life than the centaur, the chimera, or any other creature of mere fiction. But to let my reader into a secret, this knowledge of upper life, though very neces-

sary for preventing mistakes, is no very great resource to a writer whose province is comedy, or that kind of novels which, like this I am writing, is of the comic class.

What Mr. Pope says of women is very applicable to most in this station, who are, indeed, so entirely made up of form and affectation, that they have no character at all, at least none which appears. I will venture to say the highest life is much the dullest, and affords very little humour or entertainment. The various callings in lower spheres produce the great variety of humorous characters; whereas here, except among the few who are engaged in the pursuit of ambition, and the fewer still who have a relish for pleasure, all is vanity and servile imitation. Dressing and cards, eating and drinking, bowing and courtesying, make up the business of their lives.

Some there are, however, of this rank upon whom passion exercises its tyranny, and hurries them far beyond the bounds which decorum prescribes; of these the ladies are as much distinguished by their noble intrepidity, and a certain superior contempt of reputation, from the frail ones of meaner degree, as a virtuous woman

of quality is by the elegance and delicacy of her sentiments from the honest wife of a yeoman and shopkeeper. Lady Bellaston was of this intrepid character; but let not my country readers conclude from her, that this is the general conduct of women of fashion, or that we mean to represent them as such. They might as well suppose that every clergyman was represented by Thwackum, or every soldier by ensign Northerton.

There is not, indeed, a greater error than that which universally prevails among the vulgar, who, borrowing their opinion from some ignorant satirists, have affixed the character of lewdness to these times. On the contrary, I am convinced there never was less of love intrigue carried on among persons of condition than now. Our present women have been taught by their mothers to fix their thoughts only on ambition and vanity, and to despise the pleasures of love as unworthy their regard; and being afterwards, by the care of such mothers, married without having husbands, they seem pretty well confirmed in the justness of those sentiments; whence they content themselves, for the dull re-

mainder of life, with the pursuit of more innocent, but I am afraid more childish, amusements, the bare mention of which would ill suit with the dignity of this history. In my humble opinion, the true characteristic of the present beau monde is rather folly than vice, and the only epithet which it deserves is that of frivolous.

[CHAPTER I OF *Tom Jones*]

THE INTRODUCTION TO THE WORK, OR BILL
OF FARE TO THE FEAST

An author ought to consider himself not as a gentleman who gives a private or eleemosynary treat, but rather as one who keeps a public ordinary, at which all persons are welcome for their money. In the former case, it is well known that the entertainer provides what fare he pleases; and though this should be very indifferent, and utterly disagreeable to the taste of his company, they must not find any fault; nay, on the contrary, good breeding forces them outwardly to approve and to commend whatever is set before them. Now the contrary of this happens

to the master of an ordinary. Men who pay for what they eat will insist on gratifying their palates, however nice and whimsical these may prove; and if everything is not agreeable to their taste, will challenge a right to censure, to abuse, and to d—n their dinner without controul.

To prevent, therefore, giving offence to their customers by any such disappointment, it hath been usual with the honest and well-meaning host to provide a bill of fare which all persons may peruse at their first entrance into the house; and having thence acquainted themselves with the entertainment which they may expect, may either stay and regale with what is provided for them, or may depart to some other ordinary better accommodated to their taste.

As we do not disdain to borrow wit or wisdom from any man who is capable of lending us either, we have condescended to take a hint from these honest victuallers, and shall prefix not only a general bill of fare to our whole entertainment, but shall likewise give the reader particular bills to every course which is to be served up in this and the ensuing volumes.

The provision, then, which we have here made is no other than *Human Nature*. Nor do I fear that my sensible reader, though most luxurious in his taste, will start, cavil, or be offended, because I have named but one article. The tortoise — as the alderman of Bristol, well learned in eating, knows by much experience — besides the delicious calipash and calipee, contains many different kinds of food; nor can the learned reader be ignorant, that in human nature, though here collected under one general name, is such prodigious variety, that a cook will have sooner gone through all the several species of animal and vegetable food in the world, than an author will be able to exhaust so extensive a subject.

An objection may perhaps be apprehended from the more delicate, that this dish is too common and vulgar; for what else is the subject of all the romances, novels, plays, and poems, with which the stalls abound? Many exquisite viands might be rejected by the epicure, if it was a sufficient cause for his contemning of them as common and vulgar, that something was to be found in the most paltry

alleys under the same name. In reality, true nature is as difficult to be met with in authors, as the Bayonne ham, or Bologna sausage, is to be found in the shops.

But the whole, to continue the same metaphor, consists in the cookery of the author; for, as Mr. Pope tells us —

True wit is nature to advantage drest;
What oft was thought, but ne'er so well exprest.

The same animal which hath the honour to have some part of his flesh eaten at the table of a duke, may perhaps be degraded in another part, and some of his limbs gibbeted, as it were, in the vilest stall in town. Where, then, lies the difference between the food of the nobleman and the porter, if both are at dinner on the same ox or calf, but in the seasoning, the dressing, the garnishing, and the setting forth? Hence the one provokes and incites the most languid appetite, and the other turns and palls that which is the sharpest and keenest.

In like manner, the excellence of the mental entertainment consists less in the subject than in the author's skill in well dressing it up. How pleased, therefore, will

the reader be to find that we have, in the following work, adhered closely to one of the highest principles of the best cook which the present age, or perhaps that of Heliogabalus, hath produced. This great man, as is well known to all lovers of polite eating, begins at first by setting plain things before his hungry guests, rising afterwards by degrees as their stomachs may be supposed to decrease, to the very quintessence of sauce and spices. In like manner, we shall represent human nature at first to the keen appetite of our reader, in that more plain and simple manner in which it is found in the country, and shall hereafter hash and ragoo it with all the high French and Italian seasoning of affectation and vice which courts and cities afford. By these means, we doubt not but our reader may be rendered desirous to read on for ever, as the great person just above-mentioned is supposed to have made some persons eat.

[In one of the subsequent chapters of *Tom Jones*, when the neighborhood were all busily engaged in ferreting out the

parentage of the infant foundling — who was later named Tom Jones — Fielding relates an experience that fell to the lot of a poor, virtuous, unattractive and in-offensive pedagogue named Partridge, who became a victim of gossip and circumstances far more conducive to the reader's amusement than they were to Partridge's complacency of mind. As a result he lost his wife, and what was far more regrettable, he lost his position as school-master. In after years he became the wandering companion of Tom Jones when that youth was cast upon the world.

Fielding thus prefaces and describes the "battle," as he calls it, though the only battling the innocent pedagogue did was of a purely defensive nature: —]

Perfect calms at sea are always suspected by the experienced mariner to be the forerunners of a storm: and I know some persons, who, without being generally the devotees of superstition, are apt to apprehend that great and unusual peace or tranquillity will be attended with its opposite. For which reason the ancients used, on such occasions, to sacrifice to the goddess Nemesis, a deity who was thought

by them to look with an invidious eye on human felicity, and to have a peculiar delight in overturning it.

As we are very far from believing in any such heathen goddess, or from encouraging any superstition, so we wish Mr. John Fr——, or some other such philosopher, would bestir himself a little, in order to find out the real cause of this sudden transition from good to bad fortune, which hath been so often remarked, and of which we shall proceed to give an instance; for it is our province to relate facts, and we shall leave causes to persons of much higher genius.

Mankind have always taken great delight in knowing and descanting on the actions of others. Hence there have been, in all ages and nations, certain places set apart for public rendezvous, where the curious might meet and satisfy their mutual curiosity. Among these, the barbers' shops have justly borne the pre-eminence. Among the Greeks, barbers' news was a proverbial expression; and Horace, in one of his epistles, makes honourable mention of the Roman barbers in the same light.

Those of England are known to be no-wise inferior to their Greek or Roman predecessors. You there see foreign affairs discussed in a manner little inferior to that with which they are handled in the coffee-houses; and domestic occurrences are much more largely and freely treated in the former than in the latter. But this serves only for the men. Now, whereas the females of this country, especially those of the lower order, do associate themselves much more than those of other nations, our polity would be highly deficient, if they had not some place set apart likewise for the indulgence of their curiosity, seeing they are in this no way inferior to the other half of the species.

In enjoying, therefore, such place of rendezvous, the British fair ought to esteem themselves more happy than any of their foreign sisters; as I do not remember either to have read in history, or to have seen in my travels, anything of the like kind.

This place then is no other than the chandler's shop, the known seat of all the news; or, as it is vulgarly called, gossiping, in every parish in England.

Mrs. Partridge being one day at this assembly of females, was asked by one of her neighbours, if she had heard no news lately of Jenny Jones? To which she answered in the negative. Upon this the other replied, with a smile, That the parish was very much obliged to her for having turned Jenny away as she did.

Mrs. Partridge, whose jealousy, as the reader well knows, was long since cured, and who had no other quarrel to her maid, answered boldly, She did not know any obligation the parish had to her on that account; for she believed Jenny had scarce left her equal behind her.

[Her good neighbor then very ingeniously informed her that Jenny—who had been a domestic in the Partridge home, from which she had been less than nine months absent—had lately become the mother of a pair of twins,—in which statement, however, there was not a word of truth. Fielding then proceeds to describe the unhappy results of this malicious fabrication:—]

Nothing can be so quick and sudden as the operations of the mind, especially when hope, or fear, or jealousy, to which

the two others are but journeymen, set it to work. It occurred instantly to her that Jenny had scarce ever been out of her own house while she lived with her. The leaning over the chair, the sudden starting up, the Latin, the smile, and many other things, rushed upon her all at once. The satisfaction her husband expressed in the departure of Jenny appeared now to be only dissembled; again, in the same instant, to be real; but yet to confirm her jealousy, proceeding from satiety, and a hundred other bad causes. In a word, she was convinced of her husband's guilt, and immediately left the assembly in confusion.

As fair Grimalkin, who, though the youngest of the feline family, degenerates not in ferocity from the elder branches of her house, and though inferior in strength, is equal in fierceness to the noble tiger himself, when a little mouse, whom it hath long tormented in sport, escapes from her clutches for a while, frets, scolds, growls, swears; but if the trunk, or box, behind which the mouse lay hid be again removed, she flies like lightning on her prey, and with envenomed wrath, bites,

scratches, mumbles, and tears the little animal.

Not with less fury did Mrs. Partridge fly on the poor pedagogue. Her tongue, teeth, and hands, fell all upon him at once. His wig was in an instant torn from his head, his shirt from his back, and from his face descended five streams of blood, denoting the number of claws with which nature had unhappily armed the enemy.

Mr. Partridge acted for some time on the defensive only; indeed he attempted only to guard his face with his hands; but as he found that his antagonist abated nothing of her rage, he thought he might, at least, endeavour to disarm her, or rather to confine her arms; in doing which her cap fell off in the struggle, and her hair being too short to reach her shoulders, erected itself on her head; her stays likewise, which were laced through one single hole at the bottom, burst open; and her breasts, which were much more redundant than her hair, hung down below her middle; her face was likewise marked with the blood of her husband, her teeth gnashed with rage; and fire, such as sparkles from a smith's forge,

darted from her eyes. So that, altogether, this Amazonian heroine might have been an object of terror to a much bolder man than Mr. Partridge.

He had, at length, the good fortune, by getting possession of her arms, to render those weapons which she wore at the ends of her fingers useless; which she no sooner perceived, than the softness of her sex prevailed over her rage, and she presently dissolved in tears, which soon after concluded in a fit.

That small share of sense which Mr. Partridge had hitherto preserved through this scene of fury, of the cause of which he was hitherto ignorant, now utterly abandoned him. He ran instantly into the street, hallowing out that his wife was in the agonies of death, and beseeching the neighbours to fly with the utmost haste to her assistance. Several good women obeyed his summons, who entering his house, and applying the usual remedies on such occasions, Mrs. Partridge was at length, to the great joy of her husband, brought to herself.

As soon as she had a little recollected her spirits, and somewhat composed her-

self with a cordial, she began to inform the company of the manifold injuries she had received from her husband; who, she said, was not contented to injure her in her bed; but, upon her upbraiding him with it, had treated her in the cruelest manner imaginable; had tore her cap and hair from her head, and her stays from her body, giving her, at the same time, several blows, the marks of which she should carry to the grave.

The poor man, who bore on his face many more visible marks of the indignation of his wife, stood in silent astonishment at this accusation; which the reader will, I believe, bear witness for him, had greatly exceeded the truth; for indeed he had not struck her once; and this silence being interpreted to be a confession of the charge by the whole court, they all began at once, *una voce*, to rebuke and revile him, repeating often, that none but a coward ever struck a woman.

Mr. Partridge bore all this patiently; but when his wife appealed to the blood on her face, as an evidence of his barbarity, he could not help laying claim to his own blood, for so it really was; as he

thought it very unnatural, that this should rise up (as we are taught that of a murdered person often doth) in vengeance against him.

To this the women made no other answer, than that it was a pity it had not come from his heart, instead of his face; all declaring, that, if their husbands should lift their hands against them, they would have their hearts' blood out of their bodies.

[In *Tom Jones*, Fielding wrote the following prelude to the appearance of his young heroine in the book. It is worthy of note that the model he used for this exemplary character, upon whom he bestowed every grace and beauty of physical and mental form that his inventive mind could conjure up, was no other than his sainted wife. In this book she was the adorable sweetheart of the hero; while later, in his *Amelia*, she became the titular heroine of that book as the wife of Booth, and was there endowed with almost every charm and womanly virtue that could be attributed to one of her sex.

Fielding's wife was greatly beloved not

only by her husband but also by a faithful and intelligent house-maid, who lamented her death almost as deeply as Fielding himself did. In thus mingling their common sorrows they became so attached to each other that later they decided to get married; and, perhaps profiting by the example of her mistress, she made him a most excellent second wife:—]

We shall leave to the reader to determine with what judgment we have chosen the several occasions for inserting those ornamental parts of our work. Surely it will be allowed that none could be more proper than the present, where we are about to introduce a considerable character on the scene; no less, indeed, than the heroine of this heroic, historical, prosaic poem. Here, therefore, we have thought proper to prepare the mind of the reader for her reception, by filling it with every pleasing image which we can draw from the face of nature. And for this method we plead many precedents. First, this is an art well known to, and much practised by, our tragick poets, who seldom fail to prepare their audience for the reception of their principal characters.

Thus the heroe is always introduced with a flourish of drums and trumpets, in order to rouse a martial spirit in the audience, and to accommodate their ears to bombast and fustian, which Mr. Locke's blind man would not have grossly erred in likening to the sound of a trumpet. Again, when lovers are coming forth, soft music often conducts them on the stage, either to soothe the audience with the softness of the tender passion, or to lull and prepare them for that gentle slumber in which they will most probably be composed by the ensuing scene.

And not only the poets, but the masters of these poets, the managers of playhouses, seem to be in this secret; for, besides the aforesaid kettle-drums, &c., which denote the heroe's approach, he is generally ushered on the stage by a large troop of half a dozen scene-shifters; and how necessary these are imagined to his appearance, may be concluded from the following theatrical story:—

King Pyrrhus was at dinner at an ale-house bordering on the theatre, when he was summoned to go on the stage. The heroe, being unwilling to quit his shoulder

of mutton, and as unwilling to draw on himself the indignation of Mr. Wilks (his brother-manager) for making the audience wait, had bribed these his harbingers to be out of the way. While Mr. Wilks, therefore, was thundering out, "Where are the carpenters to walk on before King Pyrrhus?" that monarch very quietly ate his mutton, and the audience, however impatient, were obliged to entertain themselves with music in his absence.

To be plain, I much question whether the politician, who hath generally a good nose, hath not scented out somewhat of the utility of this practice. I am convinced that awful magistrate my lord-mayor contracts a good deal of that reverence which attends him through the year, by the several pageants which precede his pomp. Nay, I must confess, that even I myself, who am not remarkably liable to be captivated with show, have yielded not a little to the impressions of much preceding state. When I have seen a man strutting in a procession, after others whose business was only to walk before him, I have conceived a higher notion of his dignity than I have felt on seeing him in a common

situation. But there is one instance, which comes exactly up to my purpose. This is the custom of sending on a basket-woman, who is to precede the pomp at a coronation, and to strew the stage with flowers, before the great personages begin their procession. The antients would certainly have invoked the goddess Flora for this purpose, and it would have been no difficulty for their priests, or politicians to have persuaded the people of the real presence of the deity, though a plain mortal had personated her and performed her office. But we have no such design of imposing on our reader; and therefore those who object to the heathen theology may, if they please, change our goddess into the above-mentioned basket-woman. Our intention, in short, is to introduce our heroine with the utmost solemnity in our power, with an elevation of stile, and all other circumstances proper to raise the veneration of our reader. Indeed we would, for certain causes, advise those of our male readers who have any hearts, to read no farther, were we not well assured, that how amiable soever the picture of our heroine will appear, *as it is really a*

copy from nature, many of our fair countrywomen will be found worthy to satisfy any passion, and to answer any idea of female perfection which our pencil will be able to raise.

[ABOUT PHYSICIANS]

[In an early chapter of *Tom Jones*, Captain Blifil expired of heart failure, was brought from the garden into the house, and two eminent physicians were called to attend him. Without first ascertaining whether life was extinct they promptly fell into a violent dispute over his ailment, of which Fielding gives the following account. His playful remarks are of course not to be taken seriously, for no one held a higher place in his esteem than the practitioners in this honorable calling: —]

Hence arose a dispute between the learned men, in which each delivered the reasons of their several opinions. These were of such equal force, that they served both to confirm either doctor in his own sentiments, and made not the least impression on his adversary.

To say the truth, every physician almost hath his favourite disease, to which he ascribes all the victories obtained over human nature. The gout, the rheumatism, the stone, the gravel, and the consumption, have all their several patrons in the faculty; and none more than the nervous fever, or the fever on the spirits. . . .

The reader may perhaps be surprized, that, instead of endeavouring to revive the patient, the learned gentlemen should fall immediately into a dispute on the occasion of his death. . . .

There is nothing more unjust than the vulgar opinion, by which physicians are misrepresented, as friends to death. On the contrary, I believe, if the number of those who recover by physic could be opposed to that of the martyrs to it, the former would rather exceed the latter. Nay, some are so cautious on this head, that, to avoid a possibility of killing the patient, they abstain from all methods of curing, and prescribe nothing but what can neither do good nor harm. I have heard some of these, with great gravity, deliver it as a maxim, "That Nature should be left to do her own work, while

the physician stands by as it were to clap her on the back, and encourage her when she doth well." . . .

As a wise general never despises his enemy, however inferior that enemy's force may be, so neither doth a wise physician ever despise a distemper, however inconsiderable. As the former preserves the same strict discipline, places the same guards, and employs the same scouts, though the enemy be never so weak; so the latter maintains the same gravity of countenance, and shakes his head with the same significant air, let the distemper be never so trifling. And both, among many other good ones, may assign this solid reason for their conduct, that by these means the greater glory redounds to them if they gain the victory, and the less disgrace if by any unlucky accident they should happen to be conquered.

[While Fielding took great delight in setting his characters in the so-called upper class at variance with one another in matters of great moment, such as Learning, Affairs of State, and profound problems

of moral and mental import, he did not despise the impolite pastimes of the lower order of society; and the fact that he frequently had this latter class engaging in quarrels, brawls and fistic combats shows how faithfully he depicted their natural bent; for although all low-bred people are not quarrelsome, it may be set down as an almost infallible rule that all quarrelsome people are ill-bred. And yet one of the strange anomalies of human nature is, that the most contentious and irascible persons always wonder why others are so quarrelsome and stubborn.

Fielding's hero, Tom Jones, having rescued a poor woman from the hands of a villain on the highway, took her to a nearby country inn for shelter. Having lost the greater part of her clothing in the scrimmage, and thus not presenting a very tidy appearance, the landlord and his lady refused her admittance. Jones finally succeeded in getting her upstairs, after which the following lively fracas is chronicled by Fielding:—]

Now it required no very blameable degree of suspicion to imagine that Mr. Jones and his ragged companion had cer-

tain purposes in their intention, which, though tolerated in some Christian countries, connived at in others, and practised in all, are however as expressly forbidden as murder, or any other horrid vice, by that religion which is universally believed in those countries. The landlady, therefore, had no sooner received an intimation of the entrance of the above-said persons than she began to meditate the most expeditious means for their expulsion. In order to this, she had provided herself with a long and deadly instrument, with which, in times of peace, the chambermaid was wont to demolish the labours of the industrious spider. In vulgar phrase, she had taken up the broomstick, and was just about to sally from the kitchen, when Jones accosted her with a demand of a gown and other vestments, to cover the half-naked woman upstairs.

Nothing can be more provoking to the human temper, nor more dangerous to that cardinal virtue, patience, than solicitations of extraordinary offices of kindness on behalf of those very persons with whom we are highly incensed. For this reason Shakespear hath artfully introduced

his Desdemona soliciting favours for Cassio of her husband, as the means of inflaming, not only his jealousy, but his rage, to the highest pitch of madness; and we find the unfortunate Moor less able to command his passion on this occasion, than even when he beheld his valued present to his wife in the hands of his supposed rival. In fact, we regard these efforts as insults on our understanding, and to such the pride of man is very difficultly brought to submit.

My landlady, though a very good-tempered woman, had, I suppose, some of this pride in her composition, for Jones had scarce ended his request, when she fell upon him with a certain weapon, which, though it be neither long, nor sharp, nor hard, nor indeed threatens from its appearance with either death or wound, hath been however held in great dread and abhorrence by many wise men — nay, by many brave ones; insomuch, that some who have dared to look into the mouth of a loaded cannon, have not dared to look into a mouth where this weapon was brandished; and rather than run the hazard of its execution, have contented

themselves with making a most pitiful and sneaking figure in the eyes of all their acquaintance.

To confess the truth, I am afraid Mr. Jones was one of these; for though he was attacked and violently belaboured with the aforesaid weapon, he could not be provoked to make any resistance; but in a most cowardly manner applied, with many entreaties, to his antagonist to desist from pursuing her blows; in plain English, he only begged her with the utmost earnestness to hear him; but before he could obtain his request, my landlord himself entered into the fray, and embraced that side of the cause which seemed to stand very little in need of assistance.

There are a sort of heroes who are supposed to be determined in their chusing or avoiding a conflict by the character and behaviour of the person whom they are to engage. These are said to know their men, and Jones, I believe, knew his woman; for though he had been so submissive to her, he was no sooner attacked by her husband than he demonstrated an immediate spirit of resentment, and enjoined him silence under a very severe

penalty; no less than that, I think, of being converted into fuel for his own fire.

The husband, with great indignation, but with a mixture of pity, answered, "You must pray first to be made able. I believe I am a better man than yourself; ay, every way, that I am;" and presently proceeded to discharge half-a-dozen whores at the lady above stairs, the last of which had scarce issued from his lips, when a swinging blow from the cudgel that Jones carried in his hand assaulted him over the shoulders.

It is a question whether the landlord or the landlady was the most expeditious in returning this blow. My landlord, whose hands were empty, fell to with his fist, and the good wife, uplifting her broom and aiming at the head of Jones, had probably put an immediate end to the fray, and to Jones likewise, had not the descent of this broom been prevented — not by the miraculous intervention of any heathen deity, but by a very natural though fortunate accident, viz., by the arrival of Partridge, who entered the house at that instant (for fear had caused him to run every step from the hill), and who,

seeing the danger which threatened his master or companion (which you chuse to call him), prevented so sad a catastrophe by catching hold of the landlady's arm, as it was brandished aloft in the air.

The landlady soon perceived the impediment which prevented her blow; and being unable to rescue her arm from the hands of Partridge, she let fall the broom; and then leaving Jones to the discipline of her husband, she fell with the utmost fury on that poor fellow, who had already given some intimation of himself, by crying, "Zounds! do you intend to kill my friend?"

Partridge, though not much addicted to battle, would not however stand still when his friend was attacked; nor was he much displeased with that part of the combat which fell to his share; he therefore returned my landlady's blows as soon as he received them: and now the fight was obstinately maintained on all parts, and it seemed doubtful to which side Fortune would incline, when the naked lady, who had listened at the top of the stairs to the dialogue which preceded the engagement, descended suddenly from

above, and without weighing the unfair inequality of two to one, fell upon the poor woman who was boxing with Part-ridge; nor did that great champion desist, but rather redoubled his fury, when he found fresh succours were arrived to his assistance.

Victory must now have fallen to the side of the travellers (for the bravest troops must yield to numbers) had not Susan the chambermaid come luckily to support her mistress. This Susan was as two-handed a wench (according to the phrase) as any in the country, and would, I believe, have beat the famed Thalestris herself, or any of her subject Amazons; for her form was robust and man-like, and every way made for such encounters. As her hands and arms were formed to give blows with great mischief to an enemy, so was her face as well contrived to receive blows without any great injury to herself, her nose being already flat to her face; her lips were so large, that no swelling could be perceived in them, and moreover they were so hard, that a fist could hardly make any impression on them. Lastly, her cheek-bones stood out, as if

nature had intended them for two bastions to defend her eyes in those encounters for which she seemed so well calculated, and to which she was most wonderfully well inclined.

This fair creature entering the field of battle, immediately filed to that wing where her mistress maintained so unequal a fight with one of either sex. Here she presently challenged Partridge to single combat. He accepted the challenge, and a most desperate fight began between them.

Now the dogs of war being let loose, began to lick their bloody lips; now Victory, with golden wings, hung hovering in the air; now Fortune, taking her scales from her shelf, began to weigh the fates of Tom Jones, his female companion, and Partridge, against the landlord, his wife, and maid; all which hung in exact balance before her; when a good-natured accident put suddenly an end to the bloody fray, with which half of the combatants had already sufficiently feasted. This accident was the arrival of a coach and four; upon which my landlord and landlady immediately desisted from fighting, and at their

entreaty obtained the same favour of their antagonists: but Susan was not so kind to Partridge; for that Amazonian fair having overthrown and bestrid her enemy, was now cuffing him lustily with both her hands, without any regard to his request of a cessation of arms, or to those loud exclamations of murder which he roared forth.

No sooner, however, had Jones quitted the landlord, than he flew to the rescue of his defeated companion, from whom he with much difficulty drew off the enraged chambermaid: but Partridge was not immediately sensible of his deliverance, for he still lay flat on the floor, guarding his face with his hands; nor did he cease roaring till Jones had forced him to look up, and to perceive that the battle was at an end.

[In Book V, chapter v, of *Tom Jones*, we find a bit of pertinent comment on philosophers, so-called. Mr. Square, a self-styled philosopher and paragon of Virtue, was one day discovered hidden in a closet in the apartments of a woman who made no very loud boast of moral scruples:—]

The posture, indeed, in which he stood, was not greatly unlike that of a soldier who is tied neck and heels; or rather resembling the attitude in which we often see fellows in the public streets of London, who are not suffering but deserving punishment by so standing. He had a nightcap belonging to Molly on his head, and his two large eyes, the moment the rug fell, stared directly at Jones; so that when the idea of philosophy was added to the figure now discovered, it would have been very difficult for any spectator to have refrained from immoderate laughter.

I question not but the surprize of the reader will be here equal to that of Jones; as the suspicions which must arise from the appearance of this wise and grave man in such a place may seem so inconsistent with that character which he hath, doubtless, maintained hitherto, in the opinion of every one.

But to confess the truth, this inconsistency is rather imaginary than real. Philosophers are composed of flesh and blood as well as other human creatures; and however sublimated and refined the theory of these may be, a little practical

frailty is as incident to them as to other mortals. It is, indeed, in theory only, and not in practice, as we have before hinted, that consists the difference: for though such great beings think much better and more wisely, they always act exactly like other men. They know very well how to subdue all appetites and passions, and to despise both pain and pleasure; and this knowledge affords much delightful contemplation, and is easily acquired; but the practice would be vexatious and troublesome; and, therefore, the same wisdom which teaches them to know this, teaches them to avoid carrying it into execution.

[A little farther along Fielding again mentions Mr. Square in connection with a free-for-all encounter he witnessed, but in which he took no part; "for the philosophy of Square," says Fielding, "rendered him superior to all emotions, and he very calmly smoaked his pipe, as was his custom in all broils, unless when he apprehended some danger of having it broke in his mouth."]

[It is perhaps a wise saying, that "True literary critics are known by their talent

of swarming about the noblest writers." In *Tom Jones*, Fielding gives a caustic commentary on Literary Critics, who, strangely enough, have been proverbially wrong in their estimates of genius, — so much so that it has been regarded by some as a bad omen to have their writings commended by these harbingers of an author's fame. It is observable, also, that the so-called authoritative guidebooks to success in business and literary pursuits are seldom, if indeed ever, written by those who have successfully applied the methods expounded:—]

Now, in reality, the world have paid too great a compliment to critics, and have imagined them men of much greater profundity than they really are. From this complacence, the critics have been emboldened to assume a dictatorial power, and have so far succeeded, that they are now become the masters, and have the assurance to give laws to those authors from whose predecessors they originally received them.

The critic, rightly considered, is no more than the clerk, whose office it is to transcribe the rules and laws laid down by those

great judges whose vast strength of genius hath placed them in the light of legislators, in the several sciences over which they presided. This office was all which the critics of old aspired to; nor did they ever dare to advance a sentence, without supporting it by the authority of the judge from whence it was borrowed.

But in process of time, and in ages of ignorance, the clerk began to invade the power and assume the dignity of his master. The laws of writing were no longer founded on the practice of the author, but on the dictates of the critic. The clerk became the legislator, and those very peremptorily gave laws, whose business it was, at first, only to transcribe them.

Hence arose an obvious, and perhaps an unavoidable error; for these critics being men of shallow capacities, very easily mistook mere form for substance. They acted as a judge would, who should adhere to the lifeless letter of law, and reject the spirit. Little circumstances, which were perhaps accidental in a great author, were by these critics considered to constitute his chief merit, and transmitted as essentials to be observed by all his successors.

To these encroachments, time and ignorance, the two great supporters of imposture, gave authority; and thus many rules for good writing have been established, which have not the least foundation in truth or nature; and which commonly serve for no other purpose than to curb and restrain genius, in the same manner as it would have restrained the dancing-master, had the many excellent treatises on that art laid it down as an essential rule that every man must dance in chains. . . .

This word critic is of Greek derivation, and signifies judgment. Hence I presume some persons who have not understood the original, and have seen the English translation of the primitive, have concluded that it meant judgment in the legal sense, in which it is frequently used as equivalent to condemnation.

I am the rather inclined to be of that opinion, as the greatest number of critics hath of late years been found amongst the lawyers. Many of these gentlemen, from despair, perhaps, of ever rising to the bench in Westminster-hall, have placed themselves on the benches at the play-

house, where they have exerted their judicial capacity, and have given judgment *i.e.*, condemned without mercy.

The gentlemen would, perhaps, be well enough pleased, if we were to leave them thus compared to one of the most important and honourable offices in the commonwealth, and, if we intended to apply to their favour, we would do so; but, as we design to deal very sincerely and plainly too with them, we must remind them of another officer of justice of a much lower rank; to whom, as they not only pronounce, but execute, their own judgment, they bear likewise some remote resemblance.

But in reality there is another light, in which these modern critics may, with great justice and propriety, be seen; and this is that of a common slanderer. If a person who prys into the characters of others, with no other design but to discover their faults, and to publish them to the world, deserves the title of a slanderer of the reputations of men, why should not a critic, who reads with the same malevolent view, be as properly stiled the slanderer of the reputation of books?

Vice hath not, I believe, a more abject slave; society produces not a more odious vermin; nor can the devil receive a guest more worthy of him, nor possibly more welcome to him, than a slanderer. The world, I am afraid, regards not this monster with half the abhorrence which he deserves; and I am more afraid to assign the reason of this criminal lenity shown towards him; yet it is certain that the thief looks innocent in the comparison; nay, the murderer himself can seldom stand in competition with his guilt: for slander is a more cruel weapon than a sword, as the wounds which the former gives are always incurable. One method, indeed, there is of killing, and that the basest and most execrable of all, which bears an exact analogy to the vice here disclaimed against, and that is poison: a means of revenge so base, and yet so horrible, that it was once wisely distinguished by our laws from all other murders, in the peculiar severity of the punishment.

Besides the dreadful mischiefs done by slander, and the baseness of the means by which they are effected, there are

other circumstances that highly aggravate its atrocious quality; for it often proceeds from no provocation, and seldom promises itself any reward, unless some black and infernal mind may propose a reward in the thoughts of having procured the ruin and misery of another.

Shakespear hath nobly touched this vice, when he says —

Who steals my purse steals trash; 't is something,
nothing;
'T was mine, 't is his, and hath been slave to thousands:
But he that filches from me my good name
Robs me of that WHICH NOT ENRICHES HIM,
BUT MAKES ME POOR INDEED.

With all this my good reader will doubtless agree; but much of it will probably seem too severe, when applied to the slanderer of books. But let it here be considered that both proceed from the same wicked disposition of mind, and are alike void of the excuse of temptation. Nor shall we conclude the injury done this way to be very slight, when we consider a book as the author's offspring, and indeed as the child of his brain.

The reader who hath suffered his Muse

to continue hitherto in a virgin state can have but a very inadequate idea of this kind of paternal fondness. To such we may parody the tender exclamation of Macduff, "Alas! Thou hast written no book." But the author whose Muse hath brought forth will feel the pathetic strain, perhaps will accompany me with tears (especially if his darling be already no more), while I mention the uneasiness with which the big Muse bears about her burden, the painful labour with which she produces it, and, lastly, the care, the fondness, with which the tender father nourishes his favourite, till it be brought to maturity, and produced into the world.

Nor is there any paternal fondness which seems less to savour of absolute instinct, and which may so well be reconciled to worldly wisdom, as this. These children may most truly be called the riches of their father; and many of them have with true filial piety fed their parent in his old age: so that not only the affection, but the interest, of the author may be highly injured by these slanderers, whose poisonous breath brings his book to an untimely end.

Lastly, the slander of a book is, in truth, the slander of the author: for, as no one can call another bastard, without calling the mother a whore, so neither can any one give the names of sad stuff, horrid nonsense, &c., to a book, without calling the author a blockhead; which, though in a moral sense it is a preferable appellation to that of villain, is perhaps rather more injurious to his worldly interest.

Now, however ludicrous all this may appear to some, others, I doubt not, will feel and acknowledge the truth of it; nay, may, perhaps, think I have not treated the subject with decent solemnity; but surely a man may speak truth with a smiling countenance. In reality, to depreciate a book maliciously, or even wantonly, is at least a very ill-natured office; and a morose snarling critic may, I believe, be suspected to be a bad man.

I will therefore endeavour, in the remaining part of this chapter, to explain the marks of this character, and to show what criticism I here intend to obviate: for I can never be understood, unless by the very persons here meant, to insinuate that there are no proper judges of writing,

or to endeavour to exclude from the commonwealth of literature any of those noble critics to whose labours the learned world are so greatly indebted. Such were Aristotle, Horace, and Longinus, among the antients, Dacier and Bossu among the French, and some perhaps among us; who have certainly been duly authorised to execute at least a judicial authority *in foro literario*.

But without ascertaining all the proper qualifications of a critic, which I have touched on elsewhere, I think I may very boldly object to the censures of any one passed upon works which he hath not himself read. Such censurers as these, whether they speak from their own guess or suspicion, or from the report and opinion of others, may properly be said to slander the reputation of the book they condemn.

Such may likewise be suspected of deserving this character, who, without assigning any particular faults, condemn the whole in general defamatory terms; such as vile, dull, d—d stuff, &c., and particularly by the use of the monosyllable low; a word which becomes the mouth of no critic who is not RIGHT HONOURABLE.

Again, though there may be some faults justly assigned in the work, yet, if those are not in the most essential parts, or if they are compensated by greater beauties, it will savour rather of the malice of a slanderer than of the judgment of a true critic to pass a severe sentence upon the whole, merely on account of some vicious part. This is directly contrary to the sentiments of Horace:

*Verum ubi plura nitent in carmine, non ego paucis
Offendor maculis, quas aut incuria fudit,
Aut humana parum cavit natura —*

But where the beauties, more in number, shine,
I am not angry, when a casual line
(That with some trivial faults unequal flows)
A careless hand or human frailty shows.

For, as Martial says, *Aliter non fit, Avite, liber*. No book can be otherwise composed. All beauty of character, as well as of countenance, and indeed of everything human, is to be tried in this manner. Cruel indeed would it be if such a work as this history, which hath employed some thousands of hours in the composing, should be liable to be condemned, because some particular chapter, or perhaps chapters, may be obnoxious to very just and

sensible objections. And yet nothing is more common than the most rigorous sentence upon books supported by such objections, which, if they were rightly taken (and that they are not always), do by no means go to the merit of the whole. In the theatre especially, a single expression which doth not coincide with the taste of the audience, or with any individual critic of that audience, is sure to be hissed; and one scene which should be disapproved would hazard the whole piece. To write within such severe rules as these is as impossible as to live up to some splenetic opinions: and if we judge according to the sentiments of some critics, and of some Christians, no author will be saved in this world, and no man in the next.

[The following passage from *Amelia* illustrates a practice which, although more or less obsolete, is not entirely forgotten in the present age. Booth's wife, Amelia, had by means of disposing of all her little trinkets, and all her clothing, excepting only that which she wore, raised a sum of money to discharge a debt and thus prevent

her husband from going to gaol. While on his way to pay off the creditor, Booth met a person who told him that by paying a sum (all he had), to a certain person of "powerful interest" he could procure a highly remunerative place in the war-office. In the last depths of despair, Booth yielded to the importunity, and Fielding says, "The great man received the money, not as a gudgeon doth a bait, but as a pike receives a poor gudgeon into his maw." The result was that Booth went to gaol, the great man pocketed the money and forgot all about the obligation he incurred in receiving it:—]

This gentleman had a place in the War-office, and pretended to be a man of great interest and consequence; by which means he did not only receive great respect and court from the inferiour officers, but actually bubbled several of their money, by undertaking to do them services which, in reality, were not within his power. In truth, I have known few great men who have not been beset with one or more such fellows as these, through whom the inferior part of mankind are obliged to make their court to the great men them-

selves; by which means, I believe, principally, persons of real merit have often been deterred from the attempt; for these subaltern coxcombs ever assume an equal state with their masters, and look for an equal degree of respect to be paid to them; to which men of spirit, who are in every light their betters, are not easily brought to submit. These fellows, indeed, themselves have a jealous eye towards all great abilities, and are sure, to the utmost of their power, to keep all who are so endowed from the presence of their masters. They use their masters as bad ministers have sometimes used a prince — they keep all men of merit from his ears, and daily sacrifice his true honour and interest to their own profit and their own vanity. . . .

Here I shall stop one moment, and so, perhaps, will my good-natured reader; for surely it must be a hard heart which is not affected with reflecting on the manner in which this poor little sum was raised, and on the manner in which it was bestowed. A worthy family, the wife and children of a man who had lost his blood abroad in the service of his country, parting with their little all, and exposed to

cold and hunger, to pamper such a fellow as this!

And if any such reader as I mention should happen to be in reality a great man, and in power, perhaps the horror of this picture may induce him to put a final end to this abominable practice of touching, as it is called; by which, indeed, a set of leeches are permitted to suck the blood of the brave and the indigent, of the widow and the orphan. . . .

Thus did this poor man support his hopes by a dependence on that ticket which he had so dearly purchased of one who pretended to manage the wheels in the great state lottery of preferment. A lottery, indeed, which hath this to recommend it — that many poor wretches feed their imaginations with the prospect of a prize during their whole lives, and never discover they have drawn a blank.

[In one of the last chapters of *Amelia*, Fielding pays the following tribute to a shyster lawyer with whom it may be reasonably surmised that the author himself had come in contact when he was an involuntary visitant of the London gaols.

This attorney had formerly practiced in the town where Amelia had lived, and it was due to his chicanery that she was for many years (*viz.*, those years covered by the story) kept out of her inheritance, for which misdeed he was afterwards apprehended and hanged. It is interesting to note the conditions on which his "very good-natured" brother attorney at home consented to lodge no complaint against him: —]

The case then was thus: this Murphy had been clerk to an attorney in the very same town in which the doctor [Harrison] lived, and, when he was out of his time, had set up with a character fair enough, and had married a maid-servant of Mrs. Harris, by which means he had all the business to which that lady and her friends, in which number was the doctor, could recommend him.

Murphy went on with his business, and thrived very well, till he happened to make an unfortunate slip, in which he was detected by a brother of the same calling. But, though we call this by the gentle name of a slip, in respect to its being so extremely common, it was a matter in

which the law, if it had ever come to its ears, would have passed a very severe censure, being, indeed, no less than perjury and subornation of perjury.

This brother attorney, being a very good-natured man, and unwilling to bespatter his own profession, and considering, perhaps, that the consequence did in no wise affect the public, who had no manner of interest in the alternative whether A., in whom the right was, or B., to whom Mr. Murphy, by the means aforesaid, had transferred it, succeeded in an action; we mention this particular, because, as this brother attorney was a very violent party man, and a professed stickler for the public, to suffer any injury to have been done to that, would have been highly inconsistent with his principles.

This gentleman, therefore, came to Mr. Murphy, and, after shewing him that he had it in his power to convict him of the aforesaid crime, very generously told him that he had not the least delight in bringing any man to destruction, nor the least animosity against him. All that he insisted upon was, that he would not live in the same town or county with one who

had been guilty of such an action. He then told Mr. Murphy that he would keep the secret on two conditions; the one was, that he immediately quitted that country; the other was, that he should convince him he deserved this kindness by his gratitude, and that Murphy should transfer to the other all the business which he then had in those parts, and to which he could possibly recommend him.

It is the observation of a very wise man, that it is a very common exercise of wisdom in this world, of two evils to chuse the least. The reader, therefore, cannot doubt but that Mr. Murphy complied with the alternative proposed by his kind brother, and accepted the terms on which secrecy was to be obtained.

[Fielding took occasion to pay off some of his old scores with bailiffs, whom he depicts as a heartless, acquisitive sort of human beings—upon whose hospitality he is said to have been frequently thrust. The following satirical remarks were preceded by a dialogue between the bailiff (Mr. *Bondum*) and poor Booth, Amelia's husband:—]

Here the reader may be apt to conclude that the bailiff, instead of being a friend, was really an enemy to poor Booth; but, in fact, he was not so. His desire was no more than to accumulate bail-bonds; for the bailiff was reckoned an honest and good sort of man in his way, and had no more malice against the bodies in his custody than a butcher hath to those in his: and as the latter, when he takes his knife in hand, hath no idea but of the joints into which he is to cut the carcase; so the former, when he handles his writ, hath no other design but to cut out the body into as many bail-bonds as possible. As to the life of the animal, or the liberty of the man, they are thoughts which never obtrude themselves on either.

[A BRIEF SPEECH OF THE VILLAINOUS JONATHAN WILD, THE MOCK-HERO OF FIELDING'S GREAT SATIRICAL NOVEL OF THAT NAME:—]

He was scarce settled at school before he gave marks of his lofty and aspiring temper; and was regarded by all his schoolfellows with that deference which men generally pay to those superior geniuses who will exact it of them. If an orchard

was to be robbed Wild was consulted, and, though he was himself seldom concerned in the execution of the design, yet was he always concerter of it, and treasurer of the booty, some little part of which he would now and then, with wonderful generosity, bestow on those who took it. He was generally very secret on these occasions; but if any offered to plunder of his own head, without acquainting master Wild, and making a deposit of the booty, he was sure to have an information against him lodged with the schoolmaster, and to be severely punished for his pains.

[A satirical reference to Friendship, as applied to the credulous Mr. Heartfree in *Jonathan Wild* — containing a valuable lesson on Credulity: —]

I am sensible that the reader, if he hath but the least notion of greatness, must have such a contempt for the extreme folly of this fellow [Heartfree], that he will be very little concerned at any misfortunes which may befall him in the sequel; for to have no suspicion that an old schoolfellow [the villain, Jonathan Wild] with whom he had, in his tenderest years, contracted a friendship, and who, on the accidental renewing

of their acquaintance, had professed the most passionate regard for him, should be very ready to impose on him; in short, to conceive that a friend should, of his own accord, without any view to his own interest, endeavour to do him a service, must argue such weakness of mind, such ignorance of the world, and such an artless, simple, undesigning heart, as must render the person possessed of it the lowest creature and the properest object of contempt imaginable, in the eyes of every man of understanding and discernment.

[Later when this poor honest, confiding victim (who was in gaol for debts contracted through the machinations of Wild) discovered that Wild had made off with his faithful wife, all of his furniture, and all that remained of his other worldly effects, Fielding thus pictures his astonishment:—]

It is the observation of many wise men, who have studied the anatomy of the human soul with more attention than our young physicians generally bestow on that of the body, that great and violent surprize hath a different effect from that which is wrought in a good housewife by

perceiving any disorders in her kitchen; who, on such occasions, commonly spreads the disorder, not only over her whole family, but over the whole neighbourhood. — Now, these great calamities, especially when sudden, tend to stifle and deaden all the faculties, instead of rousing them; and accordingly Herodotus tells us a story of Croesus king of Lydia, who, on beholding his servants and courtiers led captive, wept bitterly; but, when he saw his wife and children in that condition, stood stupid and motionless; so stood poor Heartfree on this relation of his apprentice, nothing moving but his colour, which entirely forsook his countenance.

[Here it seems fitting to incorporate a bit of true philosophy which, although used by Fielding in another part of his work, is equally applicable to this circumstance:]

Though the observation — how apt men are to hate those they injure, or how unforgiving they are of the injuries they do themselves, be common enough, yet I do not remember to have ever seen the reason of this strange phenomenon as at first it appears. Know therefore, reader, that with much and severe scrutiny we have dis-

covered this hatred to be founded on the passion of fear, and to arise from an apprehension that the person whom we have ourselves greatly injured will use all possible endeavours to revenge and retaliate the injuries we have done him. An opinion so firmly established in bad and great minds (and those who confer injuries on others have seldom very good or mean ones) that no benevolence, nor even beneficence, on the injured side, can eradicate it. On the contrary, they refer all these acts of kindness to imposture and design of lulling their suspicion, till an opportunity offers of striking a surer and severer blow; and thus, while the good man who hath received it hath truly forgotten the injury, the evil mind which did it hath it in lively and fresh remembrance. . . . NEVER TRUST THE MAN WHO HATH REASON TO SUSPECT THAT YOU KNOW HE HATH INJURED YOU.

[Such was the case with Wild who, fearing his victim's release, trumped up a charge of embezzlement against him, which he and one of his gang swore to. Although Heartfree and his family had always borne the most exemplary character, he was convicted and sentenced

to be hanged, — entirely upon false testimony. As an instance of the proneness of human beings — after the manner of wolves and wild hogs — to set upon those of their own species who are down, Fielding adds:—]

We cannot help mentioning a circumstance here, though we doubt it will appear very unnatural and incredible to our reader; which is, that, notwithstanding the former character and behaviour of Heartfree, this story of his embezzling was so far from surprizing his neighbours, that many of them declared they expected no better from him. Some were assured he could pay forty shillings in the pound if he would. Others had overheard hints formerly pass between him and Mrs. Heartfree which had given them suspicions. And what is most astonishing of all is, that many of those who had before censured him for an extravagant heedless fool, now no less confidently abused him for a cunning, tricking, avaricious knave.

[AMBITION AND AVARICE]

There is no one circumstance in which the distempers of the mind bear a more

exact analogy to those which are called bodily, than that aptness which both have to a relapse. This is plain in the violent diseases of ambition and avarice. I have known ambition, when cured at court by frequent disappointments (which are the only physic for it), to break out again in a contest for foreman of the grand jury at an assizes; and have heard of a man who had so far conquered avarice, as to give away many a sixpence, that comforted himself, at last, on his deathbed, by making a crafty and advantageous bargain concerning his ensuing funeral, with an undertaker who had married his only child.

[A SHORT ESSAY ON VANITY]

O Vanity! how little is thy force acknowledged, or thy operations discerned! How wantonly dost thou deceive mankind under different disguises! Sometimes thou dost wear the face of pity, sometimes of generosity: nay, thou hast the assurance even to put on those glorious ornaments which belong only to heroic virtue. Thou odious, deformed monster! whom priests have railed at, philosophers despised, and poets ridiculed; is there a wretch so abandoned

as to own thee for an acquaintance in publick? — yet, how few will refuse to enjoy thee in private? nay, thou art the pursuit of most men through their lives. The greatest villainies are daily practised to please thee; nor is the meanest thief below, or the greatest hero above, thy notice. Thy embraces are often the sole aim and sole reward of the private robbery and the plundered province. It is to pamper up thee, thou harlot, that we attempt to withdraw from others what we do not want, or to withhold from them what they do. All our passions are thy slaves. Avarice itself is often no more than thy handmaid, and even Lust thy pimp. The bully Fear, like a coward, flies before thee, and Joy and Grief hide their heads in thy presence.

I know thou wilt think that whilst I abuse thee I court thee, and that thy love hath inspired me to write this sarcastical panegyric on thee; but thou art deceived: I value thee not of a farthing; nor will it give me any pain if thou shouldst prevail on the reader to censure this digression as arrant nonsense; for know, to thy confusion, that I have introduced thee here

for no other purpose than to lengthen out a short chapter.

The great are deceived if they imagine they have appropriated ambition and vanity to themselves. These noble qualities flourish as notably in a country church and churchyard as in the drawing-room, or in the closet. Schemes have indeed been laid in the vestry which would hardly disgrace the conclave. Here is a ministry, and here is an opposition. Here are plots and circumventions, parties and factions, equal to those which are to be found in courts.

Nor are the women here less practised in the highest feminine arts than their fair superiors in quality and fortune. Here are prudes and coquettes. Here are dressing and ogling, falsehood, envy, malice, scandal; in short, everything which is common to the most splendid assembly, or politest circle. Let those of high life, therefore, no longer despise the ignorance of their inferiors; nor the vulgar any longer rail at the vices of their betters.

Love, friendship, esteem, and such like, have very powerful operations in the

human mind; *interest*, however, is an ingredient seldom omitted by wise men, when they would work others to their own purposes. This is indeed a most excellent medicine, and, like Ward's pill, flies at once to the particular part of the body on which you desire to operate, whether it be the tongue, the hand, or any other member, where it scarce ever fails of immediately producing the desired effect.

[FRIENDSHIP, RELIGION AND VIRTUE USED
AS CLOAKS BY HYPOCRITES]

A treacherous friend is the most dangerous enemy; and I will say boldly, that both religion and virtue have received more real discredit from hypocrites than the wittiest profligates or infidels could ever cast upon them: nay, farther, as these two, in their purity, are rightly called the bands of civil society, and are indeed the greatest of blessings; so when poisoned and corrupted with fraud, pretence, and affectation, they have become the worst of civil curses, and have enabled men to perpetrate the most cruel mischiefs to their own species.

[OF BENEVOLENCE]

In the histories of Alexander and Cæsar we are frequently, and indeed impertinently, reminded of their benevolence and generosity, of their clemency and kindness. When the former had with fire and sword overrun a vast empire, had destroyed the lives of an immense number of innocent wretches, had scattered ruin and desolation like a whirlwind, we are told, as an example of his clemency, that he did not cut the throat of an old woman, and ravish her daughters, but was content with only undoing them. And when the mighty Cæsar, with wonderful greatness of mind, had destroyed the liberties of his country, and with all the means of fraud and force had placed himself at the head of his equals, had corrupted and enslaved the greatest people whom the sun ever saw, we are reminded, as an evidence of his generosity, of his largesses to his followers and tools, by whose means he had accomplished his purpose, and by whose assistance he was to establish it.

[In one of the early chapters of *Joseph Andrews*, Fielding, in illustrating the im-

pregnable virtue of his modern Saint Anthony (in the person of Joseph Andrews), records a highly amusing episode in which his hero is sorely tried, and from which he emerges with his virtue unscathed, but not unreviled. The great Lady Booby (widow of the squire), who employed Joseph as footman, called him to her room one day and, for reasons better understood by herself than by her poor unsophisticated footman, she flatly accused him of too great familiarity with her maids.]

As a person who is struck through the heart with a thunderbolt looks extremely surprised, nay, and perhaps is so too — thus the poor Joseph received the false accusation of his mistress; he blushed and looked confounded, which she misinterpreted to be symptoms of his guilt, and thus went on: —

“Come hither, Joseph: another mistress might discard you for these offences; but I have a compassion for your youth, and if I could be certain you would be no more guilty — Consider, child,” laying her hand carelessly upon his, “you are a handsome young fellow, and might do better; you might make your fortune.”

"Madam," said Joseph, "I do assure your ladyship I don't know whether any maid in the house is man or woman."

"Oh fie! Joseph," answered the lady, "don't commit another crime in denying the truth. I could pardon the first, but I hate a lyar."

"Madam," cries Joseph, "I hope your ladyship will not be offended at my asserting my innocence; for, by all that is sacred, I have never offered more than kissing."

"Kissing!" said the lady, with great discomposure of countenance, and more redness in her cheeks than anger in her eyes; "do you call that no crime? Kissing, Joseph, is as a prologue to a play. Can I believe a young fellow of your age and complexion will be content with kissing? No, Joseph, there is no woman who grants that but will grant more; and I am deceived greatly in you if you would not put her closely to it. What would you think, Joseph, if I admitted you to kiss me?" Joseph replied he would sooner die than have any such thought. "And yet, Joseph," returned she, "ladies have admitted their footmen to such familiarities; and footmen,

I confess to you, much less deserving them; fellows without half your charms — for such might almost excuse the crime. Tell me therefore, Joseph, if I should admit you to such freedom, what would you think of me? — tell me freely.”

“Madam,” said Joseph, “I should think your ladyship condescended a great deal below yourself.”

“Pugh!” said she; “that I am to answer to myself: but would not you insist on more? Would you be contented with a kiss? Would not your inclinations be all on fire rather by such a favour?”

“Madam,” said Joseph, “if they were, I hope I should be able to controul them, without suffering them to get the better of my virtue.”

You have heard, reader, poets talk of the statue of Surprise; you have heard likewise, or else you have heard very little, how Surprise made one of the sons of Croesus speak, though he was dumb. You have seen the faces, in the eighteen-penny gallery, when, through the trap-door, to soft or no music, Mr. Bridgewater, Mr. William Mills, or some other of ghostly appearance, hath ascended, with a face

all pale with powder, and a shirt all bloody with ribbons;—but from none of these, nor from Phidias or Praxiteles, if they should return to life—no, not from the inimitable pencil of my friend Hogarth, could you receive such an idea of surprize as would have entered in at your eyes had they beheld the Lady Booby when those last words issued out from the lips of Joseph. “Your *virtue!*” said the lady, recovering after a silence of two minutes; “I shall never survive it! Your *virtue!*—intolerable confidence! Have you the assurance to pretend, that when a lady demeans herself to throw aside the rules of decency, in order to honour you with the highest favour in her power, your virtue should resist her inclination? that, when she had conquered her own virtue, she should find an obstruction in yours? I am out of patience; did ever mortal hear of a man’s virtue? Did ever the greatest or the gravest men pretend to any of this kind? Will magistrates who punish lewdness, or parsons who preach against it, make any scruple of committing it? And can a boy, a stripling, have the confidence to talk of his virtue? You impu-

dent villain! Get out of my sight, and prepare to set out this night; for I will order you your wages immediately, and you shall be stripped and turned away. . . . You have had the vanity to misconstrue the little innocent freedom I took, in order to try whether what I had heard was true. O! my conscience! You have had the assurance to imagine I was fond of you myself!"

[This incident drew from Fielding the following apostrophe on the tyranny of Love, in which he includes an oblique thrust at his old detracter, Colley Cibber:—]

O Love, what monstrous tricks dost thou play with thy votaries of both sexes! How dost thou deceive them, and make them deceive themselves! Their follies are thy delight! Their sighs make thee laugh, and their pangs are thy merriment!

Not the great Rich, who turns men into monkeys, wheel-barrows, and whatever else best humours his fancy, hath so strangely metamorphosed the human shape; nor the great Cibber, who confounds all number, gender, and breaks through every rule of grammar at his will, hath so distorted the English language as thou doth metamor-

phose and distort all the human senses.

Thou putttest out our eyes, stoppest up our ears, and takest away the power of our nostrils; so that we can neither see the largest object, hear the loudest noise, nor smell the most poignant perfume. Again, when thou pleasest, thou canst make a molehill appear as a mountain, a Jew's-harp sound like a trumpet, and a daisy smell like a violet. Thou canst make cowardice brave, avarice generous, pride humble, and cruelty tender-hearted. In short, thou turnest the heart of man inside out, as a juggler doth a petticoat, and bringest whatsoever pleaseth thee out from it.

[Long afterwards, when Joseph Andrews returned to Lady Booby's parish and was about to be married to his adored Fanny, the lovelorn Lady Booby, whose jealousy was aroused — for though she hated him, she still loved him — called in parson Adams and gave him peremptory orders not to publish the banns or marry the couple.]

"Madam," said Adams, "if your ladyship will but hear me speak, I protest I never heard any harm of Mr. Joseph Andrews; if I had, I should have corrected

him for it; for I never have, nor will, encourage the faults of those under my cure. As for the young woman, I assure your ladyship I have as good an opinion of her as your ladyship yourself or any other can have. She is the sweetest-tempered, honestest, worthiest young creature; indeed, as to her beauty, I do not commend her on that account, though all men allow she is the handsomest woman, gentle or simple, that ever appeared in the parish."

"You are very impertinent," says she, "to talk such fulsome stuff to me. It is mighty becoming truly in a clergyman to trouble himself about handsome women, and you are a delicate judge of beauty, no doubt. A man who hath lived all his life in such a parish as this is a rare judge of beauty! Ridiculous! beauty indeed! a country wench a beauty! I shall be sick whenever I hear beauty mentioned again. And so this wench is to stock the parish with beauties, I hope. But, sir, our poor is numerous enough already; I will have no more vagabonds settled here."

"Madam," says Adams, "I only perform my office to Mr. Joseph."

"Pray, don't mister such fellows to me,"

cries the lady. . . . "Since you understand yourself no better, nor the respect due from such as you to a woman of my distinction, than to affront my ears by such loose discourse, I shall mention but one short word; it is my orders to you that you publish these banns no more; and if you dare, I will recommend it to your master, the doctor, to discard you from his service. I will, sir, notwithstanding your poor family; and then you and the greatest beauty in the parish may go and beg together."

"Madam," answered Adams, "I know not what your ladyship means by the terms *master* and *service*. I am in the service of a Master who will never discard me for doing my duty; and if the doctor (for indeed I have never been able to pay for a licence) thinks proper to turn me from my cure, God will provide me, I hope, another. At least, my family, as well as myself, have hands; and He will prosper, I doubt not, our endeavours to get our bread honestly with them. Whilst my conscience is pure, I shall never fear what man can do unto me."

One situation only of the married state is excluded from pleasure: and that is, a state of indifference: but as many of my readers, I hope, know what an exquisite delight there is in conveying pleasure to a beloved object, so some few, I am afraid, may have experienced the satisfaction of tormenting one we hate. It is, I apprehend, to come at this latter pleasure, that we see both sexes often give up that ease in marriage which they might otherwise possess, though their mate was never so disagreeable to them. Hence the wife often puts on fits of love and jealousy, nay, even denies herself any pleasure, to disturb and prevent those of her husband; and he again, in return, puts frequent restraints upon himself, and stays at home in company which he dislikes, in order to confine his wife to what she equally detests. Hence, too, must flow those tears which a widow sometimes so plentifully sheds over the ashes of a husband with whom she led a life of constant disquiet and turbulence, and whom now she can never hope to torment any more.

We are not always to conclude, that a wise man is not hurt, because he doth

not cry out and lament himself, like those of a childish or effeminate temper.

As a conquered rebellion strengthens a government, or as health is more perfectly established by recovery from some disease; so anger, when removed, often gives new life to affection.

Prudence and circumspection are necessary even to the best of men. They are indeed, as it were, a guard to Virtue, without which she can never be safe. It is not enough that your designs, nay, that your actions, are intrinsically good; you must take care they shall appear so. If your inside be never so beautiful, you must preserve a fair outside also. This must be constantly looked to, or malice and envy will take care to blacken it so, that the sagacity and goodness of an Allworthy will not be able to see through it, and to discern the beauties within. Let this, my young readers, be your constant maxim, that no man can be good enough to enable him to neglect the rules of prudence; nor will Virtue herself look beautiful, unless she be bedecked with the

outward ornaments of decency and decorum. And this precept, my worthy disciples, if you read with due attention, you will, I hope, find sufficiently enforced by examples in the following pages.

I ask pardon for this short appearance, by way of chorus, on the stage. It is in reality for my own sake, that, while I am discovering the rocks on which innocence and goodness often split, I may not be misunderstood to recommend the very means to my worthy readers, by which I intend to show them they will be undone. And this, as I could not prevail on any of my actors to speak, I myself was obliged to declare.

Fortune may tempt men of no very bad dispositions to injustice; but insults proceed only from black and rancorous minds, and have no temptations to excuse them.

There is nothing so dangerous as a question which comes by surprize on a man whose business it is to conceal truth, or to defend falsehood. For which reason those worthy personages, whose noble office it is to save the lives of their fellow-

creatures at the Old Bailey, take the utmost care, by frequent previous examination, to divine every question which may be asked their clients on the day of tryal, that they may be supplied with proper and ready answers, which the most fertile invention cannot supply in an instant. Besides, the sudden and violent impulse on the blood, occasioned by these surprizes, causes frequently such an alteration in the countenance, that the man is obliged to give evidence against himself.

I look upon the vulgar observation, "That the devil often deserts his friends, and leaves them in the lurch," to be a great abuse on that gentleman's character. Perhaps he may sometimes desert those who are only his cup acquaintance; or who, at most, are but half his; but he generally stands by those who are thoroughly his servants, and helps them off in all extremities, till their bargain expires.

A secret (as some of my readers will perhaps acknowledge from experience) is often a very valuable possession: and that not

only to those who faithfully keep it, but sometimes to such as whisper it about till it come to the ears of every one except the ignorant person who pays for the supposed concealing of what is publicly known.

The firmness and constancy of a true friend is a circumstance so extremely delightful to persons in any kind of distress, that the distress itself, if it be only temporary, and admits of relief, is more than compensated by bringing this comfort with it. Nor are instances of this kind so rare as some superficial and inaccurate observers have reported. To say the truth, want of compassion is not to be numbered among our general faults. The black ingredient which fouls our disposition is envy. Hence our eye is seldom, I am afraid, turned upward to those who are manifestly greater, better, wiser, or happier than ourselves, without some degree of malignity; while we commonly look downwards on the mean and miserable with sufficient benevolence and pity. In fact, I have remarked, that most of the defects which have discovered themselves in the friendships within my observation

have arisen from envy only: a hellish vice; and yet one from which I have known very few absolutely exempt.

I desire of the philosophers to grant, that there is in some (I believe in many) human breasts a kind and benevolent disposition, which is gratified by contributing to the happiness of others. That in this gratification alone, as in friendship, in parental and filial affection, as indeed in general philanthropy, there is a great and exquisite delight. That if we will not call such disposition love, we have no name for it. That though the pleasures arising from such pure love may be heightened and sweetened by the assistance of amorous desires, yet the former can subsist alone, nor are they destroyed by the intervention of the latter. Lastly, that esteem and gratitude are the proper motives to love, as youth and beauty are to desire, and, therefore, though such desire may naturally cease, when age or sickness overtakes its object; yet these can have no effect on love, nor ever shake or remove, from a good mind, that sensation or passion which hath gratitude and esteem for its basis.

To deny the existence of a passion of

which we often see manifest instances, seems to be very strange and absurd; and can indeed proceed only from that self-admonition which we have mentioned above: but how unfair is this! Doth the man who recognizes in his own heart no traces of avarice or ambition, conclude, therefore, that there are no such passions in human nature? Why will we not modestly observe the same rule in judging of the good, as well as the evil of others? Or why, in any case, will we, as Shakespear phrases it, "put the world in our own person?"

Predominant vanity is, I am afraid, too much concerned here. This is one instance of that adulation which we bestow on our own minds, and this almost universally. For there is scarce any man, how much soever he may despise the character of a flatterer, but will condescend in the meanest manner to flatter himself.

To those therefore I apply for the truth of the above observations, whose own minds can bear testimony to what I have advanced.

Examine your heart, my good reader, and resolve whether you do believe these

matters with me. If you do, you may now proceed to their exemplification in the following pages: if you do not, you have, I assure you, already read more than you have understood; and it would be wiser to pursue your business, or your pleasures (such as they are), than to throw away any more of your time in reading what you can neither taste nor comprehend. To treat of the effects of love to you, must be as absurd as to discourse on colours to a man born blind; since possibly your idea of love may be as absurd as that which we are told such blind man once entertained of the colour scarlet; that colour seemed to him to be very much like the sound of a trumpet: and love probably may, in your opinion, very greatly resemble a dish of soup, or a surloin of roast-beef.

Fear is never more uneasy than when it doth not certainly know its object; for on such occasions the mind is ever employed in raising a thousand bugbears and fantoms, much more dreadful than any realities, and, like children when they tell tales of hobgoblins, seems industrious in terrifying itself.

Whoever considers the common fate of great men must allow they well deserve and hardly [*i e.*, with difficulty] earn that applause which is given them by the world; for, when we reflect on the labours and pains, the cares, disquietudes, and dangers which attend their road to greatness, we may say with the divine *that a man may go to heaven with half the pains which it costs him to purchase hell.*

So great a torment is anxiety to the human mind, that we always endeavour to relieve ourselves from it by guesses, however doubtful or uncertain; on all which occasions, dislike and hatred are the surest guides to lead our suspicion to its object.

Men of great genius as easily discover one another as Freemasons can.

Circumstances of great improbability often escape men who devour a story with greedy ears.

Logicians sometimes prove too much by an argument, and politicians often overreach themselves in a scheme.

My young readers, flatter not yourselves that fire will not scorch as well as warm, and the longer we stay within its reach the more we shall burn. The admiration of a beautiful woman, though the wife of our dearest friend, may at first perhaps be innocent, but let us not flatter ourselves it will always remain so; desire is sure to succeed; and wishes, hopes, designs, with a long train of mischiefs, tread close at our heels. In affairs of this kind we may most properly apply the well-known remark of *nemo repente fuit turpissimus*. It fares, indeed, with us on this occasion as with the unwary traveller in some parts of Arabia, the desert, whom the treacherous sands imperceptibly betray till he is overwhelmed and lost. In both cases the only safety is by withdrawing our feet the very first moment we perceive them sliding.

This digression may appear impertinent to some readers; we could not, however, avoid the opportunity of offering the above hints; since of all passions there is none against which we should so strongly fortify ourselves as this, which is generally called love; for no other lays before us, especially

in the tumultuous days of youth, such sweet, such strong and almost irresistible temptations; none hath produced in private life such fatal and lamentable tragedies; and what is worst of all, there is none to whose poison and infatuation the best of minds are so liable. Ambition scarce ever produces any evil but when it reigns in cruel and savage bosoms; and avarice seldom flourishes at all but in the basest and poorest soil. Love, on the contrary, sprouts usually up in the richest and noblest minds; but there, unless nicely watched, pruned, and cultivated, and carefully kept clear of those vicious weeds which are too apt to surround it, it branches forth into wildness and disorder, produces nothing desirable, but choaks up and kills whatever is good and noble in the mind where it so abounds. In short, to drop the allegory, not only tenderness and good nature, but bravery, generosity, and every virtue are often made the instruments of effecting the most atrocious purposes of this all-subduing tyrant.

It is a good maxim to trust a person entirely or not at all; for a secret is often

innocently blabbed out by those who know but half of it.

To draw out scenes of wretchedness to too great a length, is a task very uneasy to the writer, and for which none but readers of a most gloomy complexion will think themselves ever obliged to his labours.

My worthy reader, console thyself, that however few of the other good things of life are thy lot, the best of all things, which is innocence, is always within thy own power; and, though Fortune may make thee often unhappy, she can never make thee completely and irreparably miserable without thy own consent.

It is not because innocence is more blind than guilt that the former often overlooks and tumbles into the pit which the latter foresees and avoids. The truth is, that it is almost impossible guilt should miss the discovering of all the snares in its way, as it is constantly prying closely into every corner in order to lay snares for others. Whereas innocence, having no such purpose, walks fearlessly and care-

lessly through life, and is consequently liable to tread on the gins which cunning hath laid to entrap it. To speak plainly and without allegory or figure, it is not want of sense, but want of suspicion, by which innocence is often betrayed. Again, we often admire at the folly of the dupe, when we should transfer our whole surprize to the astonishing guilt of the betrayer. In a word, many an innocent person hath owed his ruin to this circumstance alone, that the degree of villany was such as must have exceeded the faith of every man who was not himself a villain.

Few men, I believe, think better of others than of themselves; nor do they easily allow the existence of any virtue of which they perceive no traces in their own minds; for which reason I have observed, that it is extremely difficult to persuade a rogue that you are an honest man; nor would you ever succeed in the attempt by the strongest evidence, was it not for the comfortable conclusion which the rogue draws, that he who proves himself to be honest proves himself to be a fool at the same time.

A true Christian can never be disappointed if he doth not receive his reward in this world; the labourer might as well complain that he is not paid his hire in the middle of the day.

Revenge, indeed, of all kinds is strictly prohibited; wherefore, as we are not to execute it with our own hands, so neither are we to make use of the law as the instrument of private malice, and to worry each other with inveteracy and rancour. And where is the great difficulty in obeying this wise, this generous, this noble precept? If revenge be, as a certain divine, not greatly to his honour, calls it, the most luscious morsel the devil ever dropt into the mouth of a sinner, it must be allowed at least to cost us often extremely dear. It is a dainty, if indeed it be one, which we come at with great inquietude, with great difficulty, and with great danger. However pleasant it may be to the palate while we are feeding on it, it is sure to leave a bitter relish behind it; and so far, indeed, it may be called a luscious morsel, that the most greedy appetites are soon glutted, and the most eager longing for it is soon

turned into loathing and repentance. I allow there is something tempting in its outward appearance, but it is like the beautiful colour of some poisons, from which, however they may attract our eyes, a regard to our own welfare commands us to abstain.

There is not in the universe a more ridiculous nor a more contemptible animal than a proud clergyman; a turkey-cock or a jackdaw are objects of veneration when compared with him. I don't mean, by Pride, that noble dignity of mind to which goodness can only administer an adequate object, which delights in the testimony of its own conscience, and could not, without the highest agonies, bear its condemnation. By Pride I mean that saucy passion which exults in every little eventual pre-eminence over other men: such are the ordinary gifts of nature, and the paultry presents of fortune, wit, knowledge, birth, strength, beauty, riches, titles, and rank. That passion which is ever aspiring, like a silly child, to look over the heads of all about them; which, while it servilely adheres to the great,

flies from the poor, as if afraid of contamination; devouring greedily every murmur of applause and every look of admiration; pleased and elated with all kind of respect; and hurt and enflamed with the contempt of the lowest and most despicable of fools.

An injury is the object of anger; danger, of fear, and praise, of vanity; and in the same simple manner it may be asserted that goodness is the object of love.

However Fortune may be reported to favour fools, she never, I believe, shews them any countenance when they engage in play with knaves.

[A SHORT ESSAY ON TRUE WISDOM]

True wisdom, notwithstanding all which Mr. Hogarth's poor poet may have writ against riches, and in spite of all which any rich well-fed divine may have preached against pleasure, consists not in the contempt of either of these. A man may have as much wisdom in the possession of an affluent fortune, as any beggar in the streets; or may enjoy a handsome wife or

a hearty friend, and still remain as wise as any sour popish recluse, who buries all his social faculties, and starves his belly while he well lashes his back.

To say truth, the wisest man is the likeliest to possess all worldly blessings in an eminent degree; for as that moderation which wisdom prescribes is the surer way to useful wealth, so can it alone qualify us to taste many pleasures. The wise man gratifies every appetite and every passion, while the fool sacrifices all the rest to pall and satiate one.

It may be objected, that very wise men have been notoriously avaricious. I answer, Not wise in that instance. It may likewise be said, That the wisest men have been in their youth immoderately fond of pleasure. I answer, They were not wise then.

Wisdom, in short, whose lessons have been represented as so hard to learn by those who never were at her school, only teaches us to extend a simple maxim universally known and followed even in the lowest life, a little farther than that life carries it. And this is, not to buy at too dear a price.

Now, whoever takes this maxim abroad with him into the grand market of the

world, and constantly applies it to honours, to riches, to pleasures, and to every other commodity which that market affords, is, I will venture to affirm, a wise man, and must be so acknowledged in the worldly sense of the word; for he makes the best of bargains, since in reality he purchases everything at the price of a little trouble, and carries home all the good things I have mentioned, while he keeps his health, his innocence, and his reputation, the common prices which are paid for them by others, entire and to himself.

From this moderation, likewise, he learns two other lessons, which complete his character. First, never to be intoxicated when he hath made the best bargain, nor dejected when the market is empty, or when its commodities are too dear for his purchase.

[A SHORT ESSAY
ON "THE WORLD AND THE STAGE"]

The world hath been often compared to the theatre; and many grave writers, as well as the poets, have considered human life as a great drama, resembling, in almost every particular, those scenical representa-

tions which Thespis is first reported to have invented, and which have been since received with so much approbation and delight in all polite countries.

This thought hath been carried so far, and is become so general, that some words proper to the theatre, and which were at first metaphorically applied to the world, are now indiscriminately and literally spoken of both; thus stage and scene are by common use grown as familiar to us, when we speak of life in general, as when we confine ourselves to dramatic performances: and when transactions behind the curtain are mentioned, St. James's is more likely to occur to our thoughts than Drury-lane.

It may seem easy enough to account for all this, by reflecting that the theatrical stage is nothing more than a representation, or, as Aristotle calls it, an imitation of what really exists; and hence, perhaps, we might fairly pay a very high compliment to those who by their writings or actions have been so capable of imitating life, as to have their pictures in a manner confounded with, or mistaken for, the originals.

But, in reality, we are not so fond of

paying compliments to these people, whom we use as children frequently do the instruments of their amusement; and have much more pleasure in hissing and buffet-ing them, than in admiring their excellence. There are many other reasons which have induced us to see this analogy between the world and the stage.

Some have considered the larger part of mankind in the light of actors, as person-ating characters no more their own, and to which in fact they have no better title, than the player hath to be in earnest thought the king or the emperor whom he represents. Thus the hypocrite may be said to be a player; and indeed the Greeks called them both by one and the same name.

The brevity of life hath likewise given occasion to this comparison. So the im-mortal Shakespear —

———Life's a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more.

For which hackneyed quotation I will make the reader amends by a very noble one, which few, I believe, have read. It is taken from a poem called *The Deity*, published

about nine years ago, and long since buried in oblivion; a proof that good books, no more than good men, do always survive the bad.

From Thee¹ all human actions take their springs,
The rise of empires and the fall of kings!
See the vast Theatre of Time display'd,
While o'er the scene succeeding heroes tread!
With pomp the shining images succeed,
What leaders triumph, and what monarchs bleed!
Perform the parts thy providence assign'd,
Their pride, their passions, to thy ends inclin'd:
Awhile they glitter in the face of day,
Then at thy nod the phantoms pass away;
No traces left of all the busy scene,
But that remembrance says — *The things have been!*

In all these, however, and in every other similitude of life to the theatre, the resemblance hath been always taken from the stage only. None, as I remember, have at all considered the audience at this great drama.

But as Nature often exhibits some of her best performances to a very full house, so will the behaviour of her spectators no less admit the above-mentioned comparison than that of her actors. In this vast theatre of time are seated the friend and the critic; here are claps and shouts, hisses and groans;

¹ The Deity.

in short, everything which was ever seen or heard at the Theatre-Royal.

Let us examine this in one example; for instance, in the behaviour of the great audience on that scene which Nature was pleased to exhibit in the twelfth chapter of the preceding book, where she introduced Black George running away with the £500 from his friend and benefactor.

Those who sat in the world's upper gallery treated that incident, I am well convinced, with their usual vociferation; and every term of scurrilous reproach was most probably vented on that occasion.

If we had descended to the next order of spectators, we should have found an equal degree of abhorrence, though less of noise and scurrility; yet here the good women gave Black George to the devil, and many of them expected every minute that the cloven-footed gentleman would fetch his own.

The pit, as usual, was no doubt divided; those who delight in heroic virtue and perfect character objected to the producing such instances of villany, without punishing them very severely for the sake of example. Some of the author's friends

cryed, "Look'e, gentlemen, the man is a villain, but it is nature for all that." And all the young critics of the age, the clerks, apprentices, &c., called it low, and fell a groaning.

As for the boxes, they behaved with their accustomed politeness. Most of them were attending to something else. Some of those few who regarded the scene at all, declared he was a bad kind of man; while others refused to give their opinion, till they had heard that of the best judges.

Now we, who are admitted behind the scenes of this great theatre of Nature (and no author ought to write anything besides dictionaries and spelling-books who hath not this privilege), can censure the action, without conceiving any absolute detestation of the person, whom perhaps Nature may not have designed to act an ill part in all her dramas; for in this instance life most exactly resembles the stage, since it is often the same person who represents the villain and the heroic; and he who engages your admiration to-day will probably attract your contempt to-morrow. As Garrick, whom I regard in tragedy to be the greatest genius the

world hath ever produced, sometimes condescends to play the fool; so did Scipio the Great, and Lælius the Wise, according to Horace, many years ago; nay, Cicero reports them to have been “incredibly childish.” These, it is true, played the fool, like my friend Garrick, in jest only; but several eminent characters have, in numberless instances of their lives, played the fool egregiously in earnest; so far as to render it a matter of some doubt whether their wisdom or folly was predominant; or whether they were better intitled to the applause or censure, the admiration or contempt, the love or hatred, of mankind.

Those persons, indeed, who have passed any time behind the scenes of this great theatre, and are thoroughly acquainted not only with the several disguises which are there put on, but also with the fantastic and capricious behaviour of the Passions, who are the managers and directors of this theatre (for as to Reason, the patentee, he is known to be a very idle fellow and seldom to exert himself), may most probably have learned to understand the famous *nil admirari* of Horace, or in the English phrase, to stare at nothing.

A single bad act no more constitutes a villain in life, than a single bad part on the stage. The passions, like the managers of a playhouse, often force men upon parts without consulting their judgment, and sometimes without any regard to their talents. Thus the man, as well as the player, may condemn what he himself acts; nay, it is common to see vice sit as awkwardly on some men, as the character of Iago would on the honest face of Mr. William Mills.

Upon the whole, then, the man of candour and of true understanding is never hasty to condemn. He can censure an imperfection, or even a vice, without rage against the guilty party. In a word, they are the same folly, the same childishness, the same ill-breeding, and the same ill-nature, which raise all the clamours and uproars both in life and on the stage. The worst of men generally have the words rogue and villain most in their mouths, as the lowest of all wretches are the aptest to cry out low in the pit.

The author who will make me weep, says Horace, must first weep himself. In

reality, no man can paint a distress well which he doth not feel while he is painting it; nor do I doubt, but that the most pathetic and affecting scenes have been writ with tears. In the same manner it is with the ridiculous. I am convinced I never make my reader laugh heartily but where I have laughed before him; unless it should happen at any time, that instead of laughing with me he should be inclined to laugh at me. Perhaps this may have been the case at some passages in this chapter, from which apprehension I will here put an end to it.

[AN ESSAY ON HABIT]

Habit, my good reader, hath so vast a prevalence over the human mind, that there is scarce anything too strange or too strong to be asserted of it. The story of the miser, who, from long accustoming to cheat others, came at last to cheat himself, and with great delight and triumph picked his own pocket of a guinea to convey to his hoard, is not impossible or improbable. In like manner it fares with the practisers of deceit, who, from having long deceived their acquaintance, gain at

last a power of deceiving themselves, and acquire that very opinion (however false) of their own abilities, excellencies, and virtues, into which they have for years perhaps endeavoured to betray their neighbours. Now, reader, to apply this observation to my present purpose, thou must know, that as the passion generally called love exercises most of the talents of the female or fair world, so in this they now and then discover a small inclination to deceit; for which thou wilt not be angry with the beautiful creatures when thou hast considered that at the age of seven, or something earlier, miss is instructed by her mother that master is a very monstrous kind of animal, who will, if she suffers him to come too near her, infallibly eat her up and grind her to pieces: that, so far from kissing or toying with him of her own accord, she must not admit him to kiss or toy with her: and, lastly, that she must never have any affection towards him; for if she should, all her friends in petticoats would esteem her a traitress, point at her, and hunt her out of their society. These impressions, being first received, are farther and deeper inculcated

by their school-mistresses and companions; so that by the age of ten they have contracted such a dread and abhorrence of the above-named monster, that whenever they see him they fly from him as the innocent hare doth from the greyhound. Hence, to the age of fourteen or fifteen, they entertain a mighty antipathy to master; they resolve, and frequently profess, that they will never have any commerce with him, and entertain fond hopes of passing their lives out of his reach, of the possibility of which they have so visible an example in their good maiden aunt. But when they arrive at this period, and have now passed their second climacteric, when their wisdom, grown riper, begins to see a little farther, and, from almost daily falling in master's way, apprehend the great difficulty of keeping out of it; and when they observe him look often at them, and sometimes very eagerly and earnestly too (for the monster seldom takes any notice of them till at this age), they then begin to think of their danger; and, as they perceive they cannot easily avoid him, the wiser part bethink themselves of providing by other means for

their security. They endeavour, by all methods they can invent, to render themselves so amiable in his eyes, that he may have no inclination to hurt them; in which they generally succeed so well, that his eyes, by frequent languishing, soon lessen their idea of his fierceness, and so far abate their fears, that they venture to parley with him; and when they perceive him so different from what he hath been described, all gentleness, softness, kindness, tenderness, fondness, their dreadful apprehensions vanish in a moment; and now (it being usual with the human mind to skip from one extreme to its opposite, as easily, and almost as suddenly, as a bird from one bough to another) love instantly succeeds to fear: but, as it happens to persons who have in their infancy been thoroughly frightened with certain no-persons called ghosts, that they retain their dread of those beings after they are convinced that there are no such things, so these young ladies, though they no longer apprehend devouring, cannot so entirely shake off all that hath been instilled into them; they still entertain the idea of that censure which was so strongly imprinted on their

tender minds, to which the declarations of abhorrence they every day hear from their companions greatly contribute. To avoid this censure, therefore, is now their only care; for which purpose they still pretend the same aversion to the monster: and the more they love him, the more ardently they counterfeit the antipathy. By the continual and constant practice of which deceit on others, they at length impose on themselves, and really believe they hate what they love.

There are a set of religious, or rather moral writers, who teach that virtue is the certain road to happiness, and vice to misery, in this world. A very wholesome and comfortable doctrine, and to which we have but one objection, namely, that it is not true.

Indeed, if by virtue these writers mean the exercise of those cardinal virtues, which like good housewives stay at home, and mind only the business of their own family, I shall very readily concede the point; for so surely do all these contribute and lead to happiness, that I could almost

wish, in violation of all the antient and modern sages, to call them rather by the name of wisdom, than by that of virtue; for, with regard to this life, no system, I conceive, was ever wiser than that of the antient Epicureans, who held this wisdom to constitute the chief good; nor foolisher than that of their opposites, those modern epicures, who place all felicity in the abundant gratification of every sensual appetite.

But if by virtue is meant (as I almost think it ought) a certain relative quality, which is always busying itself without-doors, and seems as much interested in pursuing the good of others as its own; I cannot so easily agree that this is the surest way to human happiness; because I am afraid we must then include poverty and contempt, with all the mischiefs which backbiting, envy, and ingratitude, can bring on mankind, in our idea of happiness; nay, sometimes perhaps we shall be obliged to wait upon the said happiness to a jail; since many by the above virtue have brought themselves thither.

[A SHORT, INSTRUCTIVE ESSAY ON BOOKS]

The present age seems pretty well agreed in an opinion, that the utmost scope and end of reading is amusement only; and such, indeed, are now the fashionable books, that a reader can propose no more than mere entertainment, and it is sometimes very well for him if he finds even this, in his studies.

Letters, however, were surely intended for a much more noble and profitable purpose than this. Writers are not, I presume, to be considered as mere jack-puddings, whose business it is only to excite laughter: this, indeed, may sometimes be intermixed and served up with graver matters, in order to titillate the palate, and to recommend wholesome food to the mind; and for this purpose it hath been used by many excellent authors: "for why," as Horace says, "should not any one promulgate truth with a smile on his countenance?" Ridicule indeed, as he again intimates, is commonly a stronger and better method of attacking vice than the severer kind of satire.

When wit and humour are introduced

for such good purposes, when the agreeable is blended with the useful, then is the writer said to have succeeded in every point. Pleasantry (as the ingenious author of *Clarissa* says of a story) should be made only the vehicle of instruction; and thus romances themselves, as well as epic poems, may become worthy the perusal of the greatest of men: but when no moral, no lesson, no instruction, is conveyed to the reader, where the whole design of the composition is no more than to make us laugh, the writer comes very near to the character of a buffoon; and his admirers, if an old Latin proverb be true, deserve no great compliments to be paid to their wisdom.

After what I have here advanced I cannot fairly, I think, be represented as an enemy to laughter, or to all those kinds of writing that are apt to promote it. On the contrary, few men, I believe, do more admire the works of those great masters who have sent their satire (if I may use the expression) laughing into the world. Such are the great triumvirate, Lucian, Cervantes, and Swift. These authors I shall ever hold in the highest

degree of esteem; not indeed for that wit and humour alone which they all so eminently possessed, but because they all endeavoured, with the utmost force of their wit and humour, to expose and extirpate those follies and vices which chiefly prevailed in their several countries. I would not be thought to confine wit and humour to these writers. Shakspeare, Moliere, and some other authors, have been blessed with the same talents, and have employed them to the same purposes. There are some, however, who, though not void of these talents, have made so wretched a use of them, that, had the consecration of their labours been committed to the hands of the hangman, no good man would have regretted their loss; nor am I afraid to mention Rabelais, and Aristophanes himself, in this number. For, if I may speak my opinion freely of these two last writers, and of their works, their design appears to me very plainly to have been to ridicule all sobriety, modesty, decency, virtue, and religion, out of the world. Now, whoever reads over the five great writers first mentioned in this paragraph, must either have a very bad head

or a very bad heart if he doth not become both a wiser and a better man.

In the exercise of the mind, as well as in the exercise of the body, diversion is a secondary consideration, and designed only to make that agreeable which is at the same time useful, to such noble purposes as health and wisdom. But what should we say to a man who mounted his chamber-hobby, or fought with his own shadow, for his amusement only? how much more absurd and weak would he appear who swallowed poison because it was sweet?

How differently did Horace think of study from our modern readers!

Quid verum atque decens curo et rogo, et omnis in hoc sum:

Condo et compono, quæ mox depromere possim.

“Truth and decency are my whole care and enquiry. In this study I am entirely occupied; these I am always laying up, and so disposing that I can at any time draw forth my stores for my immediate use.” The whole epistle, indeed, from which I have paraphrased this passage, is a comment upon it, and affords many useful lessons of philosophy.

When we are employed in reading a

great and good author, we ought to consider ourselves as searching after treasures, which, if well and regularly laid up in the mind, will be of use to us on sundry occasions in our lives. If a man, for instance, should be overloaded with prosperity or adversity (both of which cases are liable to happen to us), who is there so very wise, or so very foolish, that, if he was a master of Seneca and Plutarch, could not find great matter of comfort and utility from their doctrines? I mention these rather than Plato and Aristotle, as the works of the latter are not, I think, yet completely made English, and, consequently, are less within the reach of most of my countrymen.

But perhaps it may be asked, will Seneca or Plutarch make us laugh? Perhaps not; but if you are not a fool, my worthy friend, which I can hardly with civility suspect, they will both (the latter especially) please you more than if they did. For my own part, I declare, I have not read even Lucian himself with more delight than I have Plutarch; but surely it is astonishing that such scribblers as Tom Brown, Tom D'Urfey, and the wits

of our age, should find readers, while the writings of so excellent, so entertaining, and so voluminous an author as Plutarch remain in the world, and, as I apprehend, are very little known.

The truth I am afraid is, that real taste is a quality with which human nature is very slenderly gifted. It is indeed so very rare, and so little known, that scarce two authors have agreed in their notions of it; and those who have endeavoured to explain it to others seem to have succeeded only in shewing us that they know it not themselves. If I might be allowed to give my own sentiments, I should derive it from a nice harmony between the imagination and the judgment; and hence perhaps it is that so few have ever possessed this talent in any eminent degree. Neither of these will alone bestow it; nothing is indeed more common than to see men of very bright imaginations, and of very accurate learning (which can hardly be acquired without judgment), who are entirely devoid of taste; and Longinus, who of all men seems most exquisitely to have possessed it, will puzzle his reader very much if he should attempt to decide whether imagi-

nation or judgment shine the brighter in that inimitable critic. . . .

The first thing a child is fond of in a book is a picture, the second is a story, and the third a jest. Here then is the true *Pons Asinorum*, which very few readers ever get over.

From what I have said it may perhaps be thought to appear that true taste is the real gift of nature only; and if so, some may ask to what purpose have I endeavoured to show men that they are without a blessing which it is impossible for them to attain?

Now, though it is certain that to the highest consummation of taste, as well as of every other excellence, nature must lend much assistance, yet great is the power of art, almost of itself, or at best with only slender aids from nature; and, to say the truth, there are very few who have not in their minds some small seeds of taste. "All men," says Cicero, "have a sort of tacit sense of what is right or wrong in arts and sciences, even without the help of arts." This surely it is in the power of art very greatly to improve. That most men, therefore, proceed no

farther than as I have above declared, is owing either to the want of any, or (which is perhaps yet worse) to an improper education. . . . "Evil communications corrupt good manners," is a quotation of St. Paul from Menander. *Evil books corrupt at once both our manners and our taste.*

Contempt is a port to which the pride of man submits to fly with reluctance, but those who are within it are always in a place of the most assured security.

Nothing is more unjust than to carry our prejudices against a profession into private life, and to borrow our idea of a man from our opinion of his calling. Habit, it is true, lessens the horror of those actions which the profession makes necessary, and consequently habitual; but in all other instances, Nature works in men of all professions alike; nay, perhaps, even more strongly with those who give her, as it were, a holiday, when they are following their ordinary business. A butcher, I make no doubt, would feel compunction at the slaughter of a fine horse; and though a

surgeon can feel no pain in cutting off a limb, I have known him compassionate a man in a fit of the gout. The common hangman, who hath stretched the necks of hundreds, is known to have trembled at his first operation on a head: and the very professors of human blood-shedding, who, in their trade of war, butcher thousands, not only of their fellow-professors, but often of women and children, without remorse; even these, I say, in times of peace, when drums and trumpets are laid aside, often lay aside all their ferocity, and become very gentle members of civil society. In the same manner an attorney may feel all the miseries and distresses of his fellow-creatures, provided he happens not to be concerned against them.

The good or evil we confer on others very often, I believe, recoils on ourselves. For as men of a benign disposition enjoy their own acts of beneficence equally with those to whom they are done, so there are scarce any natures so entirely diabolical, as to be capable of doing injuries, without paying themselves some pangs for the ruin which they bring on their fellow-creatures.

There is a kind of sympathy in honest minds, by means of which they give an easy credit to each other.

Persons who suspect they have given others cause of offence, are apt to conclude they are offended.

It hath been observed by some man of much greater reputation for wisdom than myself, that misfortunes seldom come single. An instance of this may, I believe, be seen in those gentlemen who have the misfortune to have any of their rogueries detected; for here discovery seldom stops till the whole is come out.

“*Parva leves capiunt animos* — Small things affect light minds,” was the sentiment of a great master of the passion of love.

The porter at a great man's door is a kind of thermometer, by which you may discover the warmth or coldness of his master's friendship. Nay, in the highest stations of all, as the great man himself hath his different kinds of salutation, from

an hearty embrace with a kiss, and my dear lord or dear Sir Charles, down to, well Mr. —, what would you have me do? so the porter to some bows with respect, to others with a smile, to some he bows more, to others less low, to others not at all. Some he just lets in, and others he just shuts out. And in all this they so well correspond, that one would be inclined to think that the great man and his porter had compared their lists together, and, like two actors concerned to act different parts in the same scene, had rehearsed their parts privately together before they ventured to perform in public. . . .

I have often thought that, by the particular description of Cerberus, the porter of hell, in the 6th *Æneid*, Virgil might possibly intend to satirize the porters of the great men in his time; the picture, at least, resembles those who have the honour to attend at the doors of our great men. The porter in his lodge answers exactly to Cerberus in his den, and, like him, must be appeased by a sop before access can be gained to his master.

Though title and fortune communicate

a splendor all around them, and the footmen of men of quality and of estate think themselves entitled to a part of that respect which is paid to the quality and estate of their masters, it is clearly otherwise with regard to virtue and understanding. These advantages are strictly personal, and swallow themselves all the respect which is paid to them. To say the truth, this is so very little, that they cannot well afford to let any others partake with them. As these therefore reflect no honour on the domestic, so neither is he at all dishonoured by the most deplorable want of both in his master. Indeed it is otherwise in the want of what is called virtue in a mistress, the consequence of which we have before seen: for in this dishonour there is a kind of contagion, which, like that of poverty, communicates itself to all who approach it.

Now for these reasons we are not to wonder that servants (I mean among the men only) should have so great regard for the reputation of the wealth of their masters, and little or none at all for their character in other points, and that, though they would be ashamed to be the footman

of a beggar, they are not so to attend upon a rogue or a blockhead; and do consequently make no scruple to spread the fame of the iniquities and follies of their said masters as far as possible, and this often with great humour and merriment. In reality, a footman is often a wit as well as a beau, at the expence of the gentleman whose livery he wears.

Nothing is more erroneous than the common observation, that men who are ill-natured and quarrelsome when they are drunk, are very worthy persons when they are sober: for drink, in reality, doth not reverse nature, or create passions in men which did not exist in them before. It takes away the guard of reason, and consequently forces us to produce those symptoms, which many, when sober, have art enough to conceal. It heightens and inflames our passions (generally indeed that passion which is uppermost in our mind), so that the angry temper, the amorous, the generous, the good-humoured, the avaricious, and all other dispositions of men, are in their cups heightened and exposed.

And yet as no nation produces so many drunken quarrels, especially among the lower people, as England (for indeed, with them, to drink and to fight together are almost synonymous terms), I would not, methinks, have it thence concluded, that the English are the worst-natured people alive. Perhaps the love of glory only is at the bottom of this; so that the fair conclusion seems to be, that our countrymen have more of that love, and more of bravery, than any other plebeians. And this the rather, as there is seldom anything ungenerous, unfair, or ill-natured, exercised on these occasions: nay, it is common for the combatants to express good-will for each other even at the time of the conflict; and as their drunken mirth generally ends in a battle, so do most of their battles end in friendship.

If there be enough of goodness in a character to engage the admiration and affection of a well-disposed mind, though there should appear some of those little blemishes *quas humana parum cavit natura*, they will raise our compassion rather than our abhorrence. Indeed, nothing can be

of more moral use than the imperfections which are seen in examples of this kind; since such form a kind of surprize, more apt to affect and dwell upon our minds than the faults of very vicious and wicked persons. The foibles and vices of men, in whom there is great mixture of good, become more glaring objects from the virtues which contrast them and shew their deformity; and when we find such vices attended with their evil consequence to our favourite characters, we are not only taught to shun them for our own sake, but to hate them for the mischiefs they have already brought on those we love.

All persons under the apprehension of danger convert whatever they see and hear into the objects of that apprehension.

Fear hath the common fault of a justice of peace, and is apt to conclude hastily from every slight circumstance, without examining the evidence on both sides.

It is an observation sometimes made, that to indicate our idea of a simple fellow, we say, he is easily to be seen through:

nor do I believe it a more improper denotation of a simple book.

Notwithstanding the sentiment of the Roman satirist, which denies the divinity of fortune, and the opinion of Seneca to the same purpose; Cicero, who was, I believe, a wiser man than either of them, expressly holds the contrary; and certain it is, there are some incidents in life so very strange and unaccountable, that it seems to require more than human skill and foresight in producing them.

It may be laid down as a general rule, that no woman who hath any great pretensions to admiration is ever well pleased in a company where she perceives herself to fill only the second place. This observation, however, I humbly submit to the judgment of the ladies, and hope it will be considered as retracted by me if they shall dissent from my opinion.

Of all the ministers of vengeance, there are none with whom the devil deals so treacherously as with those whom he employs in executing the mischievous pur-

poses of an angry mistress; for no sooner is revenge executed on an offending lover than it is sure to be repented; and all the anger which before raged against the beloved object, returns with double fury on the head of his assassin. . . .

It is usual for people who have rashly or inadvertently made any animate or inanimate thing the instrument of mischief to hate the innocent means by which the mischief was effected (for this is a subtle method which the mind invents to excuse ourselves, the last objects on whom we would willingly wreak our vengeance).

Those who have read any romance or poetry, ancient or modern, must have been informed that love hath wings: by which they are not to understand, as some young ladies by mistake have done, that a lover can fly; the writers, by this ingenious allegory, intending to insinuate no more than that lovers do not march like horse-guards.

[ON DIVIDING BOOKS INTO CHAPTERS]

There are certain mysteries or secrets in all trades, from the highest to the lowest,

from that of prime-ministering to this of authoring, which are seldom discovered unless to members of the same calling. Among those used by us gentlemen of the latter occupation, I take this of dividing our works into books and chapters to be none of the least considerable. Now, for want of being truly acquainted with this secret, common readers imagine, that by this art of dividing we mean only to swell our works to a much larger bulk than they would otherwise be extended to. These several places therefore in our paper, which are filled with our books and chapters, are understood as so much buckram, stays, and stay-tape in a taylor's bill, serving only to make up the sum total, commonly found at the bottom of our first page and of his last.

But in reality the case is otherwise, and in this as well as all other instances we consult the advantage of our reader, not our own; and indeed, many notable uses arise to him from this method; for, first, those little spaces between our chapters may be looked upon as an inn or resting-place where he may stop and take a glass or any other refreshment as it

pleases him. Nay, our fine readers will, perhaps, be scarce able to travel farther than through one of them in a day. As to those vacant pages which are placed between our books, they are to be regarded as those stages where in long journies the traveller stays some time to repose himself, and consider of what he hath seen in the parts he hath already passed through; a consideration which I take the liberty to recommend a little to the reader; for, however swift his capacity may be, I would not advise him to travel through these pages too fast; for if he doth, he may probably miss the seeing some curious productions of nature, which will be observed by the slower and more accurate reader. A volume without any such places of rest resembles the opening of wilds or seas, which tires the eye and fatigues the spirit when entered upon.

Secondly, what are the contents prefixed to every chapter but so many inscriptions over the gates of inns (to continue the same metaphor), informing the reader what entertainment he is to expect, which if he likes not, he may travel on to the next; for, in biography, as we are not tied

down to an exact concatenation equally with other historians, so a chapter or two (for instance, this I am now writing) may be often passed over without any injury to the whole. And in these inscriptions I have been as faithful as possible, not imitating the celebrated Montaigne, who promises you one thing and gives you another; nor some title-page authors, who promise a great deal and produce nothing at all.

There are, besides these more obvious benefits, several others which our readers enjoy from this art of dividing; though perhaps most of them too mysterious to be presently understood by any who are not initiated into the science of authoring. To mention therefore, but one which is most obvious, it prevents spoiling the beauty of a book by turning down its leaves, a method otherwise necessary to those readers who (though they read with great improvement and advantage) are apt, when they return to their study after half-an-hour's absence, to forget where they left off.

These divisions have the sanction of great antiquity. Homer not only divided

his great work into twenty-four books (in compliment perhaps to the twenty-four letters to which he had very particular obligations), but, according to the opinion of some very sagacious criticks, hawked them all separately, delivering only one book at a time (probably by subscription). He was the first inventor of the art which hath so long lain dormant, of publishing by numbers; an art now brought to such perfection, that even dictionaries are divided and exhibited piecemeal to the public; nay, one bookseller hath (to encourage learning and ease the public) contrived to give them a dictionary in this divided manner for only fifteen shillings more than it would have cost entire.

Virgil hath given us his poem in twelve books, an argument of his modesty; for by that, doubtless, he would insinuate that he pretends to no more than half the merit of the Greek; for the same reason, our Milton went originally no farther than ten; till, being puffed up by the praise of his friends, he put himself on the same footing with the Roman poet.

I shall not, however, enter so deep into this matter as some very learned criticks

have done; who have with infinite labour and acute discernment discovered what books are proper for embellishment, and what require simplicity only, particularly with regard to similes, which I think are now generally agreed to become any book but the first.

I will dismiss this subject with the following observation: that it becomes an author generally to divide a book, as it does a butcher to joint his meat, for such assistance is of great help to both the reader and the carver.

[AN EXPLANATION OF THE TERM,
“TO RIDE AND TIE”]

Mr. Adams discharged the bill, and they were both setting out, having agreed to ride and tie; a method of travelling much used by persons who have but one horse between them, and is thus performed. The two travellers set out together, one on horseback, the other on foot: now, as it generally happens that he on horseback outgoes him on foot, the custom is, that, when he arrives at the distance agreed on, he is to dismount, tie the horse to some gate, tree, post, or other thing, and then

proceed on foot; when the other comes up to the horse he unties him, mounts, and gallops on, till, having passed by his fellow-traveller, he likewise arrives at the place of tying. _____

It hath been observed, by wise men or women, I forget which, that all persons are doomed to be in love once in their lives. No particular season is, as I remember, assigned for this; but the age at which Miss Bridget was arrived [above thirty], seems to me as proper a period as any to be fixed on for this purpose: it often, indeed, happens much earlier; but when it doth not, I have observed it seldom or never fails about this time. Moreover, we may remark that at this season love is of a more serious and steady nature than what sometimes shows itself in the younger parts of life. The love of girls is uncertain, capricious, and so foolish that we cannot always discover what the young lady would be at; nay, it may almost be doubted whether she always knows this herself.

Now we are never at a loss to discern this in women about forty; for as such

grave, serious, and experienced ladies well know their own meaning, so it is always very easy for a man of the least sagacity to discover it with the utmost certainty. . . .

And to say the truth, there is, in all points, great difference between the reasonable passion which women at this age conceive towards men, and the idle and childish liking of a girl to a boy, which is often fixed on the outside only, and on things of little value and no duration; as on cherry-cheeks, small, lily-white hands, sloe-black eyes, flowing locks, downy chins, dapper shapes; nay, sometimes on charms more worthless than these, and less the party's own; such are the outward ornaments of the person, for which men are beholden to the taylor, the laceman, the periwig-maker, the hatter, and the milliner, and not to nature. Such a passion girls may well be ashamed, as they generally are, to own either to themselves or others.

Nothing can be more reasonable, than that slaves and flatterers should exact the same taxes on all below them, which they themselves pay to all above them.

Be it known then, that the human species are divided into two sorts of people, to-wit, high people and low people. As by high people I would not be understood to mean persons literally born higher in their dimensions than the rest of the species, nor metaphorically those of exalted characters or abilities; so by low people I cannot be construed to intend the reverse. High people signify no other than people of fashion, and low people those of no fashion. Now, this word fashion hath by long use lost its original meaning, from which at present it gives us a very different idea; for I am deceived if by persons of fashion we do not generally include a conception of birth and accomplishments superior to the herd of mankind; whereas, in reality, nothing more was originally meant by a person of fashion than a person who drest himself in the fashion of the times; and the word really and truly signifies no more at this day. Now, the world being thus divided into people of fashion and people of no fashion, a fierce contention arose between them; nor would those of one party, to avoid suspicion, be seen publickly to speak to those of

the other, though they often held a very good correspondence in private. In this contention it is difficult to say which party succeeded; for, whilst the people of fashion seized several places to their own use, such as courts, assemblies, operas, balls, &c., the people of no fashion, besides one royal place, called his Majesty's Bear-garden, have been in constant possession of all hops, fairs, revels, &c. Two places have been agreed to be divided between them, namely, the church and the playhouse, where they segregate themselves from each other in a remarkable manner; for, as the people of fashion exalt themselves at church over the heads of the people of no fashion, so in the playhouse they abase themselves in the same degree under their feet. This distinction I have never met with any one able to account for: it is sufficient that, so far from looking on each other as brethren in the Christian language, they seem scarce to regard each other as of the same species. . . .

And with regard to time, it may not be unpleasant to survey the picture of dependence like a kind of ladder; as, for instance; early in the morning arises the

postillion, or some other boy, which great families, no more than great ships, are without, and falls to brushing the clothes and cleaning the shoes of John the footman; who, being drest himself, then applies his hands to the same labours for Mr. Secondhand, the squire's gentleman; the gentleman in the like manner, a little later in the day, attends the squire; and the squire is no sooner equipped than he attends the levee of my lord; which is no sooner over than my lord himself is seen at the levee of the favourite, who, after the hour of homage is at an end, appears himself to pay homage to the levee of his sovereign. Nor is there, perhaps, in this whole ladder of dependence, any one step at a greater distance from the other than the first from the second; so that to a philosopher the question might only seem, whether you would chuse to be a great man at six in the morning, or at two in the afternoon. And yet there are scarce two of these who do not think the least familiarity with the persons below them a condescension, and, if they were to go one step farther, a degradation.

In all bargains, whether to fight or to marry, or concerning any other such business, little previous ceremony is required to bring the matter to an issue when both parties are really in earnest.

Though envy is at best a very malignant passion, yet is its bitterness greatly heightened by mixing with contempt towards the same object; and very much afraid I am, that whenever an obligation is joined to these two, indignation and not gratitude will be the product of all three.

It is with jealousy as with the gout: when such distempers are in the blood, there is never any security against their breaking out; and that very often on the slightest occasions, and when least suspected.

There is no conduct less politic, than to enter into any confederacy with your friend's servants against their master: for by these means you afterwards become the slave of these very servants; by whom you are constantly liable to be betrayed.

The most formal appearance of virtue, when it is only an appearance, may, perhaps, in very abstracted considerations, seem to be rather less commendable than virtue itself without this formality; but it will, however, be always more commended; and this, I believe, will be granted by all, that it is necessary, unless in some very particular cases, for every woman to support either the one or the other.

Virgil, I think, tells us, that when the mob are assembled in a riotous and tumultuous manner, and all sorts of missile weapons fly about, if a man of gravity and authority appears amongst them, the tumult is presently appeased, and the mob, which when collected into one body, may be well compared to an ass, erect their long ears at the grave man's discourse.

On the contrary, when a set of grave men and philosophers are disputing; when wisdom herself may in a manner be considered as present, and administering arguments to the disputants; should a tumult arise among the mob, or should one scold, who is herself equal in noise to a mighty mob, appear among the said philosophers;

their disputes cease in a moment, wisdom no longer performs her ministerial office, and the attention of every one is immediately attracted by the scold alone.

The ancients may be considered as a rich common, where every person who hath even the smallest tenement in Parnassus hath a free right to fatten his muse. Or, to place it in a clearer light, we moderns are to the ancients what the poor are to the rich. By the poor here I mean that large and venerable body which, in English, we call the mob. Now, whoever hath had the honour to be admitted to any degree of intimacy with this mob, must well know that it is one of their established maxims to plunder and pillage their rich neighbours without any reluctance; and that this is held to be neither sin nor shame among them. And so constantly do they abide and act by this maxim, that, in every parish almost in the kingdom, there is a kind of confederacy ever carrying on against a certain person of opulence called the squire, whose property is considered as free-booty by all his poor neighbours; who, as they conclude that there

is no manner of guilt in such depredations, look upon it as a point of honour and moral obligation to conceal, and to preserve each other from punishment on all such occasions.

In like manner are the ancients, such as Homer, Virgil, Horace, Cicero, and the rest, to be esteemed among us writers, as so many wealthy squires, from whom we, the poor of Parnassus, claim an immemorial custom of taking whatever we can come at.

A man is capable of doing what he hath done already, and it is possible for one who hath been a villain once, to act the same part again.

Women, to their glory be it spoken, are more generally capable of that violent and apparently disinterested passion of love, which seeks only the good of its object, than men.

Though there are many gentlemen who very well reconcile it to their consciences to possess themselves of the whole fortune of a woman, without making her any kind

of return; yet to a mind, the proprietor of which doth not deserve to be hanged, nothing is, I believe, more irksome than to support love with gratitude only; especially where inclination pulls the heart a contrary way.

The elegant Lord Shaftesbury somewhere objects to telling too much truth: by which it may be fairly inferred, that, in some cases, to lie is not only excusable but commendable.

And surely there are no persons who may so properly challenge a right to this commendable deviation from truth, as young women in the affair of love; for which they may plead precept, education, and above all, the sanction, nay, I may say the necessity of custom, by which they are restrained, not from submitting to the honest impulses of nature (for that would be a foolish prohibition), but from owning them.

Though Nature hath by no means mixed up an equal share either of curiosity or vanity in every human composition, there is perhaps no individual to whom she hath not allotted such a proportion of both as

requires much arts, and pains too, to subdue and keep under;— a conquest, however, absolutely necessary to every one who would in any degree deserve the characters of wisdom or good breeding.

Heroes, notwithstanding the high ideas which, by the means of flatterers, they may entertain of themselves, or the world may conceive of them, have certainly more of mortal than divine about them. However elevated their minds may be, their bodies at least (which is much the major part of most) are liable to the worst infirmities, and subject to the vilest offices of human nature. Among these latter, the act of eating, which hath by several wise men been considered as extremely mean and derogatory from the philosophic dignity, must be in some measure performed by the greatest prince, hero, or philosopher upon earth; nay, sometimes Nature hath been so frolicsome as to exact of these dignified characters a much more exorbitant share of this office than she hath obliged those of the lowest order to perform.

To say the truth, as no known inhabitant of this globe is really more than man, so

none need be ashamed of submitting to what the necessities of man demand; but when those great personages I have just mentioned condescend to aim at confining such low offices to themselves — as when, by hoarding or destroying, they seem desirous to prevent any others from eating — then they surely become very low and despicable.

[A SHORT INVOCATION TO FAME, ETC.]

Comfort me by a solemn assurance, that when the little parlour in which I sit at this instant shall be reduced to a worse furnished box, I shall be read with honour by those who never knew nor saw me, and whom I shall neither know nor see. . . .

And now . . . whose assistance shall I invoke to direct my pen?

First, Genius; thou gift of Heaven; without whose aid in vain we struggle against the stream of nature. Thou who dost sow the generous seeds which art nourishes, and brings to perfection. Do thou kindly take me by the hand, and lead me through all the mazes, the winding labyrinths of nature. Initiate me into all those mysteries which profane eyes never beheld. Teach

me, which to thee is no difficult task, to know mankind better than they know themselves. Remove that mist which dims the intellects of mortals, and causes them to adore men for their art, or to detest them for their cunning, in deceiving others, when they are, in reality, the objects only of ridicule, for deceiving themselves. Strip off the thin disguise of wisdom from self-conceit, of plenty from avarice, and of glory from ambition. Come, thou that hast inspired thy Aristophanes, thy Lucian, thy Cervantes, thy Rabelais, thy Molière, thy Shakespear, thy Swift, thy Marivaux, fill my pages with humour; till mankind learn the good-nature to laugh only at the follies of others, and the humility to grieve at their own.

And thou, almost the constant attendant on true genius, Humanity, bring all thy tender sensations. If thou hast already disposed of them all between thy Allen and thy Lyttleton, steal them a little while from their bosoms. Not without these the tender scene is painted. From these alone proceed the noble, disinterested friendship, the melting love, the generous sentiment, the ardent gratitude, the soft compassion,

the candid opinion; and all those strong energies of a good mind, which fill the moistened eyes with tears, the glowing cheeks with blood, and swell the heart with tides of grief, joy, and benevolence.

And thou, O Learning! (for without thy assistance nothing pure, nothing correct, can genius produce) do thou guide my pen. Thee in thy favorite fields, where the limpid, gently-rolling Thames washes thy Etonian banks, in early youth I have worshipped. To thee, at thy birchen altar, with true Spartan devotion, I have sacrificed my blood. Come then, and from thy vast and luxuriant stores, in long antiquity piled up, pour forth the rich profusion. Open thy Mæonian and thy Mantuan coffers, with whatever else includes thy philosophic, thy poetic, and thy historical treasures, whether with Greek or Roman characters thou hast chosen to inscribe the ponderous chests: give me a while that key to all thy treasures, which to thy Warburton thou hast entrusted.

Lastly, come Experience, long conversant with the wise, the good, the learned, and the polite. Nor with them only, but with every kind of character, from the minister

at his levee, to the bailiff in his spunging-house; from the dutchess at her drum, to the landlady behind her bar. From thee only can the manners of mankind be known; to which the recluse pedant, however great his parts or extensive his learning may be, hath ever been a stranger.

Come all these, and more, if possible; for arduous is the task I have undertaken; and without all your assistance, will, I find, be too heavy for me to support. But if you all smile on my labours I hope still to bring them to a happy conclusion. . . .

The great happiness of being known to posterity, with the hopes of which we so delighted ourselves in the foregoing, is the portion of few. To have the several elements which compose our names, as Sydenham expresses it, repeated a thousand years hence, is a gift beyond the power of title and wealth; and is scarce to be purchased, unless by the sword and the pen.

[A SHORT DISSERTATION ON NATURE, IN
HER ATTITUDE TOWARDS INDIVIDUALS]

Be it known that the great Alma Mater, Nature, is of all other females the most obstinate, and tenacious of her purpose. So true is that observation,

Naturam expellas furca licet, usque recurret.

Which I need not render in English, it being to be found in a book which most fine gentlemen are forced to read. Whatever Nature, therefore, purposes to herself, she never suffers any reason, design, or accident to frustrate. Now, though it may seem to a shallow observer that some persons were designed by Nature for no use or purpose whatever, yet certain it is that no man is born into the world without his particular allotment; viz., some to be kings, some statesmen, some ambassadors, some bishops, some generals, and so on. Of these there be two kinds; those to whom Nature is so generous to give some endowment qualifying them for the parts she intends them afterwards to act on this stage, and those whom she uses as instances of her unlimited power,

and for whose preferment to such and such stations Solomon himself could have invented no other reason than Nature designed them so. These latter some great philosophers have, to shew them to be the favourites of Nature, distinguished by the honourable appellation of NATURALS. Indeed, the true reason of the general ignorance of mankind on this head seems to be this; that, as Nature chuses to execute these her purposes by certain second causes, and as many of these second causes seem so totally foreign to her design, the wit of man, which, like his eye, sees best directly forward, and very little and imperfectly what is oblique, is not able to discern the end by the means. Thus, how a handsome wife or daughter should contribute to execute her original designation of a general, or how flattery or half a dozen houses in a borough-town should denote a judge, or a bishop, he is not capable of comprehending. And, indeed, we ourselves, wise as we are, are forced to reason *ab effectu*; and if we had been asked what Nature had intended such men for, before she herself had by the event demonstrated her purpose, it is possible we might sometimes have been

puzzled to declare; for it must be confessed that at first sight, and to a mind uninspired, a man of vast natural capacity and much acquired knowledge may seem by Nature designed for power and honour, rather than one remarkable only for the want of these, and indeed all other qualifications; whereas daily experience convinces us of the contrary, and drives us as it were into the opinion I have here disclosed.

[In Fielding's narrative of his journey to the next world he relates how he, in company with a number of other spirits, arrived at the Gate, where they all stood outside listening to Judge Minos arguing with the various applicants for admission. He says: —]

THE PROCEEDINGS OF JUDGE MINOS
AT THE GATE OF ELYSIUM

I now got near enough to the gate to hear the several claims of those who endeavoured to pass. The first, among other pretensions, set forth that he had been very liberal to an hospital; but Minos answered, "Ostentation!" and re-

pulsed him. The second exhibited that he had constantly frequented his church, been a rigid observer of fast-days: he likewise represented the great animosity he had shewn to vice in others, which never escaped his severest censure; and as to his own behaviour, he had never been once guilty of whoring, drinking, gluttony, or any other excess. He said he had disinherited his son for getting a bastard. "Have you so?" said Minos; "then pray return into the other world and beget another; for such an unnatural rascal shall never pass this gate." A dozen others, who had advanced with very confident countenances, seeing him rejected, turned about of their own accord, declaring, if he could not pass, they had no expectation, and accordingly they followed him back to earth; which was the fate of all who were repulsed, they being obliged to take a further purification, unless those who were guilty of some very heinous crimes, who were hustled in at a little back gate, whence they tumbled immediately into the bottomless pit.

The next spirit that came up declared he had done neither good nor evil in the

world; for that since his arrival at man's estate he had spent his whole time in search of curiosities; and particularly in the study of butterflies, of which he had collected an immense number. Minos made him no answer, but with great scorn he pushed him back.

There now advanced a very beautiful spirit indeed. She began to ogle Minos the moment she saw him. She said she hoped there was some merit in refusing a great number of lovers, and dying a maid, though she had had the choice of a hundred. Minos told her she had not refused enow yet, and turned her back.

She was succeeded by a spirit who told the judge he believed his works would speak for him. "What works?" answered Minos. "My dramatic works," replied the other, "which have done so much good in recommending virtue and punishing vice." "Very well," said the judge; "if you please to stand by, the first person who passes the gate by your means shall carry you in with him; but, if you will take my advice, I think, for expedition sake, you had better return, and live another life upon earth." The bard grum-

bled at this, and replied that, besides his poetical works, he had done some other good things: for that he had once lent the whole profits of a benefit-night to a friend, and by that means had saved him and his family from destruction. Upon this the gate flew open, and Minos desired him to walk in, telling him, if he had mentioned this at first, he might have spared the remembrance of his plays. The poet answered, he believed, if Minos had read his works, he would set a higher value on them. He was then beginning to repeat, but Minos pushed him forward, and, turning his back to him, applied himself to the next passenger, a very genteel spirit, who made a very low bow to Minos, and then threw himself into an erect attitude, and imitated the motion of taking snuff with his right hand. Minos asked him what he had to say for himself. He answered, he would dance a minuet with any spirit in Elysium: that he could likewise perform all his other exercises very well, and hoped he had in his life deserved the character of a perfect fine gentleman. Minos replied it would be great pity to rob the world of so fine a

gentleman, and therefore desired him to take the other trip. The beau bowed, thanked the judge, and said he desired no better. Several spirits expressed much astonishment at this his satisfaction; but we were afterwards informed he had not taken the emetic above mentioned.

A miserable old spirit now crawled forwards, whose face I thought I had formerly seen near Westminster Abbey. He entertained Minos with a long harangue of what he had done when in the HOUSE; and then proceeded to inform him how much he was worth, without attempting to produce a single instance of any one good action. Minos stopt the career of his discourse, and acquainted him he must take a trip back again. "What! to S——house?" said the spirit in an ecstasy; but the judge, without making him any answer turned to another, who, with a very solemn air and great dignity, acquainted him that he was a duke. "To the right-about, Mr. Duke," cried Minos, "you are infinitely too great a man for Elysium;" and then, giving him a kick on the breech, he addressed himself to a spirit who, with fear and trembling, begged he might not

go to the bottomless pit: he said he hoped Minos would consider that, though he had gone astray, he had suffered for it — that it was necessity which drove him to the robbery of eighteenpence, which he had committed, and for which he was hanged — that he had done some good actions in his life — that he had supported an aged parent with his labour — that he had been a very tender husband and a kind father — and that he had ruined himself by being bail for his friend. At which words the gate opened, and Minos bid him enter, giving him a slap on the back as he passed by him.

A great number of spirits now came forwards, who all declared they had the same claim, and that the captain should speak for them. He acquainted the judge that they had been all slain in the service of their country. Minos was going to admit them, but had the curiosity to ask who had been the invader, in order, as he said, to prepare the back gate for him. The captain answered they had been the invaders themselves — that they had entered the enemy's country, and burnt and plundered several cities. "And for what reason?"

said Minos. "By the command of him who paid us," said the captain; "that is the reason of a soldier. We are to execute whatever we are commanded, or we should be a disgrace to the army, and very little deserve our pay." "You are brave fellows indeed," said Minos; "but be pleased to face about, and obey my command for once, in returning back to the other world: for what should such fellows as you do where there are no cities to be burnt, nor people to be destroyed? But let me advise you to have a stricter regard to truth for the future, and not call the depopulating other countries the service of your own." The captain answered, in a rage, "D—n me! do you give me the lie?" and was going to take Minos by the nose, had not his guards prevented him, and immediately turned him and all his followers back the same road they came.

Four spirits informed the judge that they had been starved to death through poverty — being the father, mother, and two children; that they had been honest and as industrious as possible, till sickness had prevented the man from labour. "All that is very true," cried a grave spirit who

stood by. "I know the fact; for these poor people were under my cure."

"You was, I suppose, the parson of the parish," cries Minos; "I hope you had a good living, sir." "That was but a small one," replied the spirit; "but I had another a little better."—"Very well," said Minos; "let the poor people pass." At which the parson was stepping forwards with a stately gait before them; but Minos caught hold of him and pulled him back, saying, "Not so fast, doctor—you must take one step more into the other world first; for no man enters that gate without charity."

A very stately figure now presented himself, and, informing Minos he was a patriot, began a very florid harangue on public virtue and the liberties of his country. Upon which Minos shewed him the utmost respect, and ordered the gate to be opened. The patriot was not contented with this applause; he said he had behaved as well in place as he had done in the opposition; and that, though he was now obliged to embrace the court measures, yet he had behaved very honestly to his friends, and brought as many in as was possible. "Hold a moment," says Minos:

“on second consideration, Mr. Patriot, I think a man of your great virtue and abilities will be so much missed by your country, that, if I might advise you, you should take a journey back again. I am sure you will not decline it; for I am certain that you will, with great readiness, sacrifice your own happiness to the public good.”

The patriot smiled, and told Minos he believed he was in jest; and was offering to enter the gate, but the judge laid fast hold of him and insisted on his return, which the patriot still declining, he at last ordered his guards to seize him and conduct him back.

A spirit now advanced, and the gate was immediately thrown open to him before he had spoken a word. I heard some one whisper, “That is our last lord mayor!”

It now came to our company’s turn. The fair spirit which I mentioned with so much applause in the beginning of my journey passed through very easily; but the grave lady was rejected on her first appearance, Minos declaring that there was not a single prude in Elysium.

The judge then addressed himself to me, who little expected to pass this fiery

trial. I confessed I had indulged myself very freely with wine and women in my youth, but had never done an injury to any man living, nor avoided an opportunity of doing good; that I pretended to very little virtue more than general philanthropy and private friendship. I was proceeding, when Minos bid me enter the gate, and not indulge myself with trumpeting forth my virtues. I accordingly passed forward with my lovely companion, and, embracing her with vast eagerness, but spiritual innocence, she returned my embrace in the same manner, and we both congratulated ourselves on our arrival in this happy region, whose beauty no painting of the imagination can describe.

[While Fielding was en route to Lisbon the sailing vessel was becalmed and his party betook themselves to a country inn on the shore, where they remained for some days, waiting for a favorable wind. In his journal there appears the following account of the landlord, named Francis, and his "amiable" lady:—]

He had no more passion than an Ichthofagus or Æthiopian fisher. He wished not

for anything, thought not of anything; indeed he scarce did anything or said anything. Here I cannot be understood strictly; for then I must describe a nonentity, whereas I would rob him of nothing but that free agency which is the cause of all corruption and of all the misery of human nature. No man, indeed, ever did more than this farmer, for he was an absolute slave to labour all the week; but in truth, as my sagacious reader must have at first apprehended, when I said he resigned the care of the house to his wife, I meant more than I then expressed, even the house and all that belonged to it; for he was really a farmer only under the direction of his wife. In a word, so composed, so serene, so placid a countenance, I never saw; and he satisfied himself by answering to every question he was asked, "I don't know anything about it, sir; I leaves all that to my wife."

Now, as a couple of this kind would, like two vessels of oil, have made no composition in life, and for want of all savour must have palled every taste; nature or fortune, or both of them, took care to provide a proper quantity of acid in the

materials that formed the wife, and to render her a perfect helpmate for so tranquil a husband. She abounded in whatsoever he was defective; that is to say, in almost everything. She was indeed as vinegar to oil, or a brisk wind to a standing-pool, and preserved all from stagnation and corruption. . . .

A tyrant, a trickster, and a bully, generally wear the marks of their several dispositions in their countenances; so do the vixen, the shrew, the scold, and all other females of the like kind. But, perhaps, nature hath never afforded a stronger example of all this than in the case of Mrs. Francis. She was a short, squat woman; her head was closely joined to her shoulders, where it was fixed somewhat awry; every feature of her countenance was sharp and pointed; her face was furrowed with the small-pox; and her complexion, which seemed to be able to turn milk to curds, not a little resembled in colour such milk as had already undergone that operation. She appeared, indeed, to have many symptoms of a deep jaundice in her look; but the strength and firmness of her voice overbalanced them all; the tone of this was

a sharp treble at a distance, for I seldom heard it on the same floor, but was usually waked with it in the morning, and entertained with it almost continually through the whole day.

Though vocal be usually put in opposition to instrumental music, I question whether this might not be thought to partake of the nature of both; for she played on two instruments, which she seemed to keep for no other use from morning till night; these were two maids, or rather scolding-stocks, who, I suppose, by some means or other, earned their board, and she gave them their lodging *gratis*, or for no other service than to keep her lungs in constant exercise.

She differed, as I have said, in every particular from her husband; but very remarkably in this, that, as it was impossible to displease him, so it was as impossible to please her; and as no art could remove a smile from his countenance, so could no art carry it into hers. If her bills were remonstrated against she was offended with the tacit censure of her fair-dealing; if they were not, she seemed to regard it as a tacit sarcasm on her folly, which might

have set down larger prices with the same success. On this latter hint she did indeed improve, for she daily raised some of her articles. A pennyworth of fire was to-day rated at a shilling, to-morrow at eighteen-pence; and if she dressed us two dishes for two shillings on the Saturday, we paid half-a-crown for the cookery of one on the Sunday; and, whenever she was paid, she never left the room without lamenting the small amount of her bill, saying, "she knew not how it was that others got their money by gentlefolks, but for her part she had not the art of it." When she was asked why she complained, when she was paid all she demanded, she answered, "she could not deny that, nor did she know that she had omitted anything; but that it was but a poor bill for gentlefolks to pay."

[The following is an excerpt from Fielding's Preface to his "Voyage to Lisbon." These lines are among the last he wrote: —]

To make a traveller an agreeable companion to a man of sense, it is necessary, not only that he should have seen much,

but that he should have overlooked much of what he hath seen. Nature is not, any more than a great genius, always admirable in her productions, and therefore the traveller, who may be called her commentator, should not expect to find everywhere subjects worthy of his notice.

As there are few things which a traveller is to record, there are fewer on which he is to offer his observations: this is the office of the reader; and it is so pleasant a one, that he seldom chuses to have it taken from him, under the pretence of lending him assistance. Some occasions, indeed, there are, when proper observations are pertinent, and others when they are necessary; but good sense alone must point them out. I shall lay down only one general rule; which I believe to be of universal truth between relator and hearer, as it is between author and reader; this is, that the latter never forgive any observation of the former which doth not convey some knowledge that they are sensible they could not possibly have attained of themselves.

But all his pains in collecting knowledge, all his judgment in selecting, and all his art in communicating it, will not suffice,

unless he can make himself, in some degree, an agreeable as well as an instructive companion. The highest instruction we can derive from the tedious tale of a dull fellow scarce ever pays us for our attention. There is nothing, I think, half so valuable as knowledge.

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